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Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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Library staff walk out on Gonzales

By DENNIS B. CHAN
dennis_chan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gonzales

Joeten Kiyu Public Library employees turned their backs on what they allege is a "climate of fear" under executive director John Gonzales yesterday morning—walking out on him and effectively forcing the library to close until after 2pm yesterday.

See JKPL on Page 4

FRUSTRATED AND DISMAYED

MHS students question: What 'Students First'?

By DENNIS B. CHAN
dennis_chan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Marianas High School students flooded the *Saipan Tribune*'s copy room late yesterday afternoon with about 70 letters to the editor, said to be triggered by a decision to merge a U.S. Government class with an AP History class to accommodate students who had been left teacher-less after several teachers went on medical leave.

MHS principal Cherlyn Cabrera acknowledged in an interview close to press time that she was aware of the letters and her students' frustrations, but also pointed to the pressures of MHS' limited classrooms and resources, saying the issue is a "temporary frustration" that would be resolved when some teachers return to work next week.

The letters reveal that MHS

See MHS on Page 4

OPA, Fitial in talks to possibly resolve case

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Office of the Public Auditor legal counsel George Hasselback and the lawyer of former governor Benigno R. Fitial are now working to possibly resolve the criminal case against Fitial without going to trial.

Hasselback and attorney Stephen Nutting informed Superior Court Associate Judge David A. Wiseman yesterday afternoon about the parties' intent to resolve the case.

Wiseman gave the parties

See OPA on Page 4

LENTEN TRADITION JAYSON CAMACHO

Fr. Isaac Ayuyu places the sign of the cross with ashes on the forehead of a parishioner during the 11am Mass yesterday at Santa Soledad Parish in Kagman to celebrate the first day of Lent that will last until Easter. Catholics attended church yesterday in celebration of Ash Wednesday.

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The Obama administration put its new deportation-relief program on hold.
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Wagging her tail a mile a minute, a beagle called Miss P become America's top dog.
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GOT A NEWS TIP?
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Local

Tinian farmers may lose funding if DoD cancels use of lands

By JAYSON CAMACHO
jayson_camacho@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Tinian farmers may have gotten a reprieve in their use of military leased lands until July 2016 but they may yet lose the funding being provided by the U.S Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service if no new relocation site is identified or once the leaseback expires.

USDA-NRCS provides some $300,000 or more to CNMI farmers. In fiscal year 2014, Tinian farmers received that amount in financial assistance. This fiscal year, a total of $436,800 is available to Commonwealth farmers, most of which goes to Tinian farmers.

Tinian's farmers benefit from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program that allows them to receive financial and technical assistance to implement conservation practices.

Tinian Cattlemen Association president Jose Dela Cruz said that losing the federal assistance will have a big economic impact on the community.

Dela Cruz said they are also partners with USDA-NRCS for the beef or cattle industry initiative and if they lose the lands they are using, it will set back the initiative.

In an interview at his office in USDA Service Center in Garapan, USDA-NRCS district conservationist Kendal Hicks said if the military does not move forward with the land being leased and doesn't identify a new site that farmers can use, Tinian farmers using the military lands may be put out of business.

"You're placing cattlemen effectively and very likely out of business, unless he is able to acquire some substitute land through Department of Public Lands, so worst case scenario is that somebody could be put out of business," Hicks said.

He said it is not so much a loss of assets as a loss of income-generating ability.

"You take away their fields of grass, they cannot raise cattle anymore, so their money-making operation ceases to exist. That means no funding will be provided. That is one of our bedrock rules and requirements in order to have financial assistance contract with any agriculture producer. They have to be able to show a control of the land for the life of the contract," Hicks said.

He said that money is dispersed based on the completion of contract items and they reimburse the farmers for their work on conservation practices. An example is 1,000 feet of fence built on their land. USDA-NRCS staff would inspect it to make sure that it was installed properly and then they certify it and then reimburse the farmer if it meets standards.

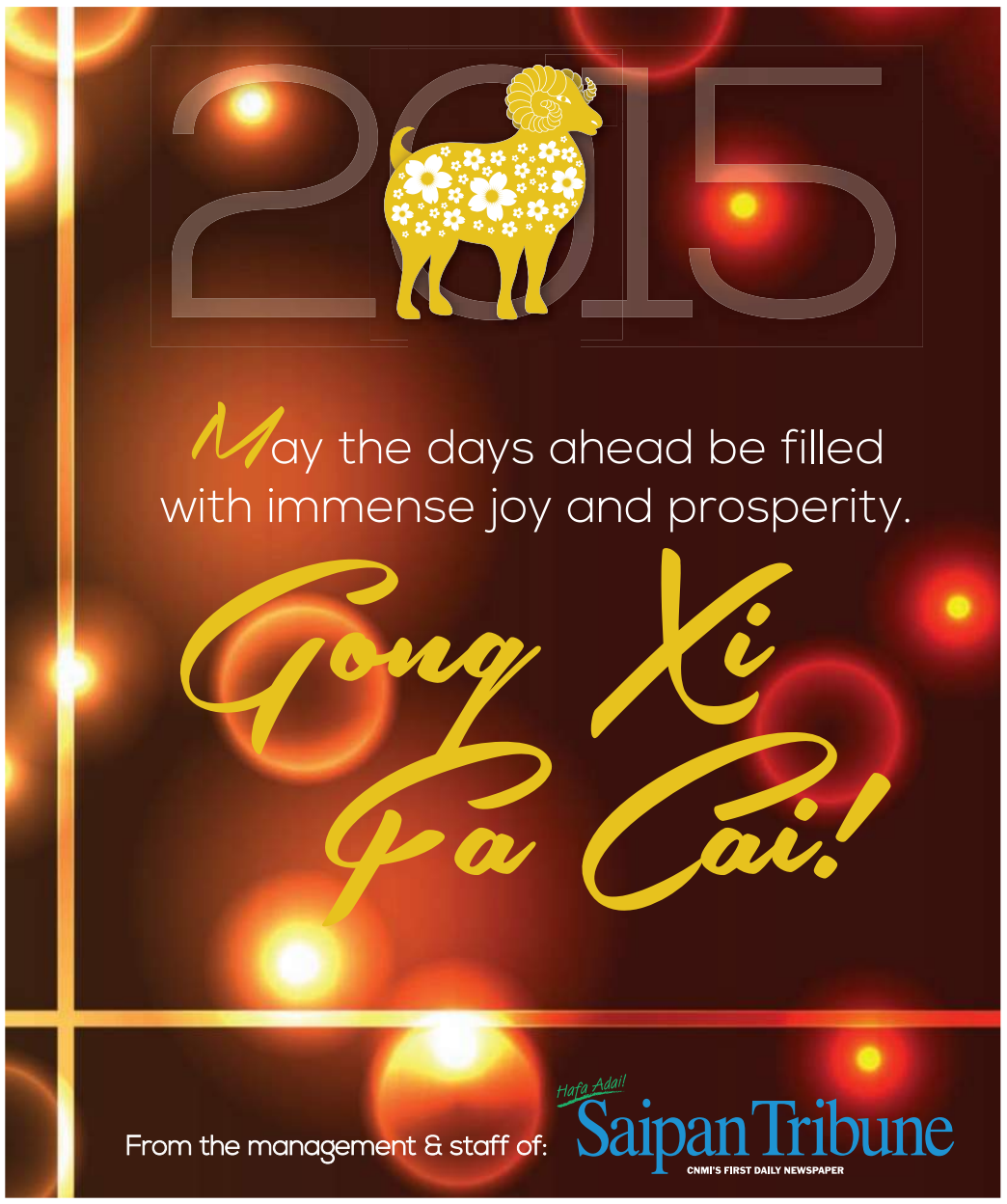
However, the farmer usually doesn't have just one contract item on the list; they would usually have eight to 10 items. Hicks said it is based on the concept that farmers would normally pay for all of the work and materials and would be reimbursed for it if they are under the program. CNMI farmers have different cost lists, with Saipan being the lowest, Tinian being in the middle, and Rota being the highest in reimbursement based on shipping.

For the Tinian farmers' cost list, using the fence as an example, is $8.41 per foot for the barbed wire, multiplied with 1,000 feet and that is how much the farmer would get.

Dela Cruz said he uses what USDA-NRCS provides him for clearing his land, planting needed vegetation for cattle, and providing water facilities.

"There are other farmers here that get different funding costs from NRCS so it isn't only me," he said.

Hicks said they provide EQIP assistance not only to Tinian farmers but also Saipan and Rota farmers who are legal residents and have farmlands. The program also doesn't only apply to U.S residents.



Lawmaker wants further study of order blocking immigration plan

By JOEL D. PINAROC
joel_pinaroc@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

CNMI lawmakers need to study further a U.S. District Court order blocking President Barrack Obama's executive action on immigration reform.

For now, the court order will have a bigger effect on undocumented aliens in the mainland than in U.S. territories.

According to Rep. Angel Demapan (R-Saipan), the decision could mean that the federal court "just wants to further iron out the legality in the process of immigration" or propose "a better way" of going about the immigration process.

The CNMI lawmaker said the court decision will have a bigger effect on the U.S. mainland, simply because of the sheer number of undocumented aliens.

The CNMI and Guam also have a number of undocumented migrants, but the number is nowhere near that of mainland workers.

Demapan, chairman of the House Committee on Federal and Foreign Affairs, said it might still be a "wait and see" situation on the effects of the court ruling, as far the CNMI is concerned.

A federal court in Texas issued the order Wednesday, which essentially blocks an executive action by Obama to defer the deportation of millions of undocumented immigrants.

The court order also compels U.S Citizenship and Immigration Services to temporarily suspend immigration services, particularly for Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents.

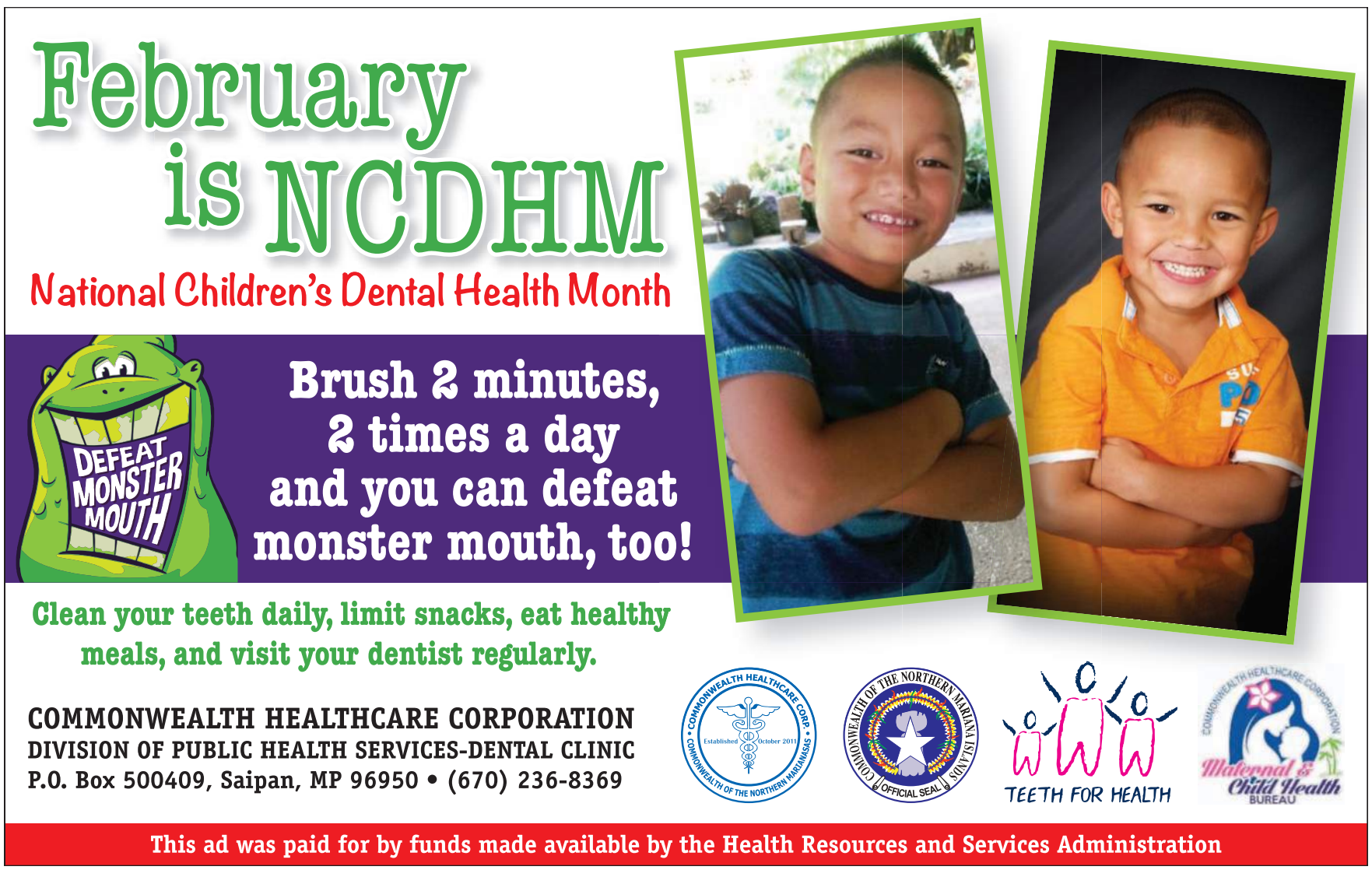
The DAPA is seen to have an effect on illegal aliens in U.S. territories, including the CNMI, because many have children born in the territory.

DAPA is said to allow undocumented parents of lawful U.S citizens to defer deportation and seek job benefits.

The court hearing does not affect the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, another immigration policy included in Obama's executive action.

USCIS has already issued an advisory, saying that due to a federal court order, "USCIS will not begin accepting requests for the expansion of DACA on Feb. 18 as originally planned."

"The court's temporary injunction, issued Feb. 16, does not affect the existing DACA. Individuals may continue to come forward and request an initial grant of DACA or renewal of DACA under the guidelines established in 2012," the advisory further states.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Visitor arrivals up 8 pct. in Jan.

Marking the highest month of visitor arrivals since September 2005, January 2015 visitor arrivals to the Northern Mariana Islands rose 8 percent compared to January 2014. According to the Marianas Visitors Authority, arrivals to the islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota registered 45,688 visitors in January 2015, compared to 42,122 visitors received in January 2014.

» Highest monthly visitor arrivals in nearly 10 years

Arrivals from Korea soared 53 percent in January to 21,145 visitors, the highest ever monthly visitor arrivals from Korea. Targeting the winter high season, Asiana Airlines operated additional flights to Saipan from Seoul four times a week beginning Dec. 2 using an Airbus A320 with 171 seats.

"The strong upward trend in Korean arrivals is expected to continue throughout the winter season with additional seats coming online. Jeju Air is planning to launch an additional daily flight to Saipan from Incheon from March 28 using a Boeing 737-800, which has 186 seats, bringing an additional 67,890 seats to the NMI in the first year," said MVA managing director Perry Tenorio. "In addition, Jeju Air is also planning to open an FIT lounge on Saipan in March."

Arrivals from China grew 12 percent in January to 13,933 visitors. An increase is also projected for February 2015, as almost all flights from China to the NMI are fully sold out during the Lunar New Year in the second half of February. By contrast, however, given perennial weak market demand right after Lunar New Year, the MVA plans to make advertising into the market from March to April.

Arrivals from Japan fell 34 percent to 8,310 visitors in January as Asiana's suspension of Saipan services from Osaka for January to March impacted the Japan market very heavily with a 46-percent decrease in air seat supply in January. The priority for MVA is to identify new airlift from Japan to the CNMI in 2015 in order to stop the slide in Japanese arrivals.

Arrivals from Russia fell 63 percent to 425 visitors in January as a result of the suspension of direct flights in August. Russia's economic instability and collapsing Russian ruble have caused a dramatic fall in demand for international travel from Russia. The MVA is actively working with local travel trade to support their sales of CNMI tours and is working with Asiana Airlines to provide airfare discounts for routes to the CNMI from Russia's Far East.

Arrivals for the month included one ship arrival from Japan with 450 persons.

Economic highlights

The Japanese government upgraded its view of industrial production in January 2015, and left its overall economic assessment of moderate recovery unchanged as the economy rebounds from an unexpected recession last year. During January, the yen appreciated slightly against the U.S. dollar to 118.55, up from 119.76 in December.

Major indicators in the Korean economy, such as mining and manufacturing production, retail sales and facility investment, are gradually improving and employment continues to rise. The South Korean won/dollar exchange rate rose 1.33 won over the past month to close at 1,098.06 against the U.S. dollar.

A Chinese Academy of Sciences think tank predicts the economy will develop steadily in 2015, with GDP expanding by an estimated 7.2 percent. The value of the Chinese currency renminbi, or the yuan, strengthened by 21 basis points to 6.1247 against the U.S. dollar in its central parity rate, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trading System. ***(MVA)***

Malua Peter joins CCA board

The Commonwealth Cancer Association announced yesterday the election of Maria Malua T. Peter as a new member of the CCA board of directors. Member elections took place at the CCA annual membership and board of directors meeting on Jan. 15, 2015, at 5:30pm at the CCA conference room in Gualo Rai.

The meeting also saw the re-election of Roman "Bo" T. Palacios, Magdalena "Maggie" C. Camacho, and Vivian S. Taitano, completing the CCA's seven-member board, which also includes incumbent members Lauri B. Ogumoro, Bobbi Grizzard, and Agnes McPhetres.

At the Feb. 17 board meeting, the election of board officers saw the re-elections of Ogumoro to serve as president, Palacios as vice president, Grizzard as secretary, and Camacho as treasurer.

The CCA extends thanks to all of its partners, donors, and individuals who contribute to the successful programs of the CCA. The public is encouraged to learn about our programs and contribute to the very important and worthwhile work of the association. For more information, contact the CCA at telephone 682-0050 or via email at cca@ccamarianas.org or visit our website at www.ccamarianas.org. ***(CCA)***

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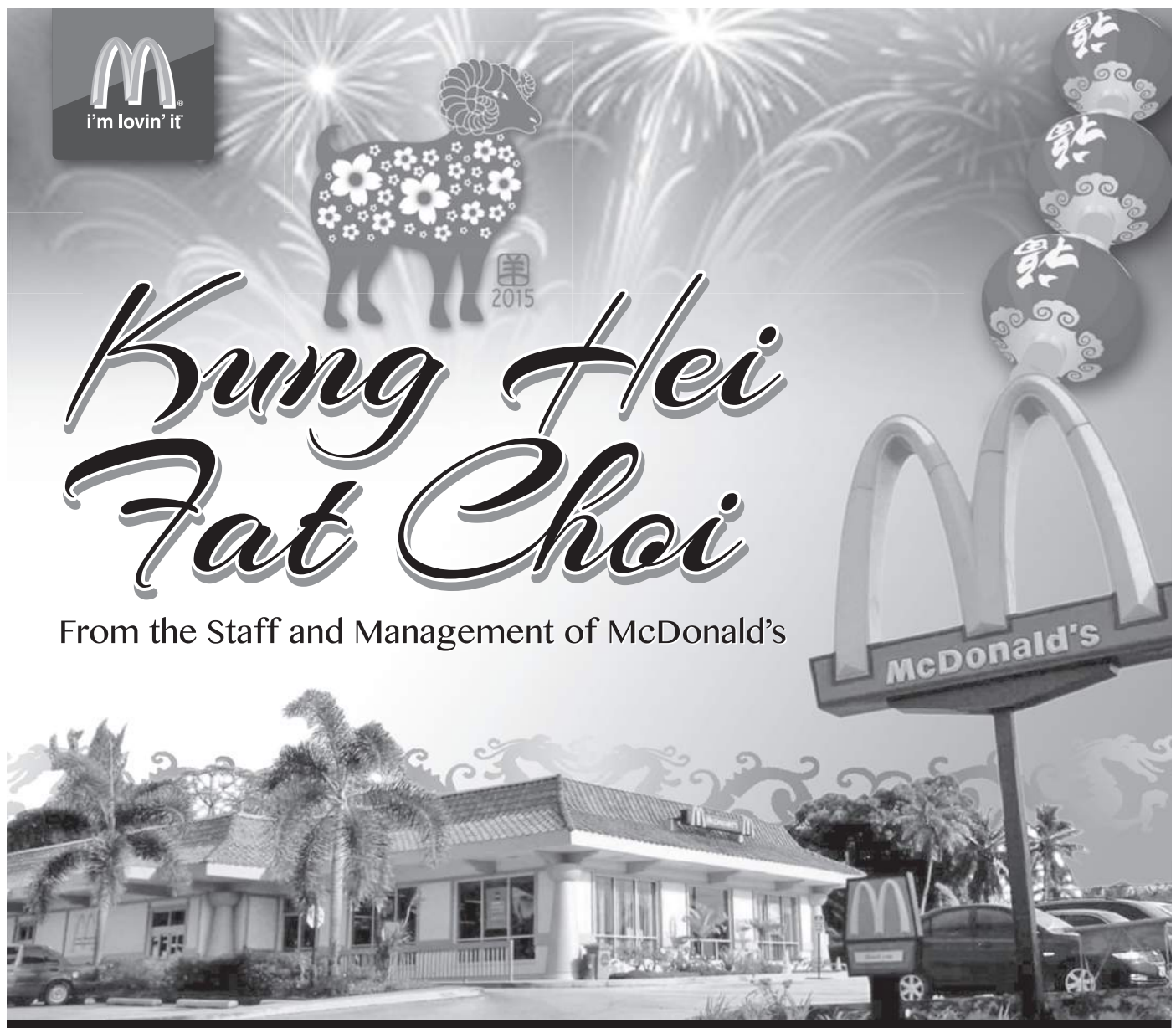
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Chinese chef serves up Lunar New Year treats at Hyatt

By JAYSON CAMACHO
jayson_camacho@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Hyatt Regency Saipan is celebrating the Year of the Sheep by importing a Chinese sous chef and having him whip up a bevy of delicacies from the Middle Kingdom in time for Saipan's Lunar New Year festivities.

Sous chef Robin Luo is on loan from Hyatt Regency Tianjin East and for three days, starting today, Feb. 19, he will be introducing his scrumptious gourmet dishes.

Hyatt's Lunar New Year celebration will start with a traditional firecracker and Chinese lion dance at 6:30pm today at the hotel's lobby. Luo will then present his gastronomic creations for dinner from 6pm to 9pm at the Kili Café and Terrace.

The buffet special is priced at $60 per person and $35 for Club at the Hyatt members and includes iced tea and free flowing beer.

The 32-year-old Luo began his cooking career at age 10, inspired by his mother who always loved to cook, and started cooking professionally at 17. Luo then received an internship at Grand Hyatt Beijing and the rest is culinary history.

JAYSON CAMACHO
Sous chef Robin Luo is on loan from Hyatt Regency Tianjin East.

"I really like cooking and I cook different kinds of food most of the time," said Luo.

Saipan Tribune got to sample Hyatt's Lunar New Year buffet Tuesday evening with six types of dishes.

Appetizers were pickled cucumber and cherry radish with Beijing aged vinegar and garlic and fried shishamo with sweet sauce.

For the soup, Luo's dish of Beijing cabbage took eight hours to cook and is similar to cooking shark fin soup.

The hot entrées featured four dishes and included seafood fried rice with seasoned vegetables, honey glazed king prawns with dried chili and ginger, black bean paste fish with vegetables, and the crispy fried catfish with sweet and sour sauce.

Among the four dishes, the seafood fried rice with seasoned vegetables was a hit—not as oily as other fried rice dishes on the island. The added ingredient was diced cucumbers that went well with the fried rice.

A decorative bowl of fruits that included watermelon, kiwi, honeydew, strawberry, and melon rounded out the meal.

Luo said the sampling is just a small number compared to what the three-night buffet will feature and will rotate every night with different dishes.

Hyatt sales manager Nancy McDowell is inviting the community to enjoy Luo's cooking and celebrate the Lunar New Year at the Hyatt.

Saipan municipal council sets 1st session today

The Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council will be holding its first regular session today at the Hon. Pedro T. Nakatsuakas Memorial Building in Chalan Kanoa at 1:30pm.

Items up for discussion include the adopt-a-place program, village revitalization, and the Neighborhood Watch program. This will be the council's first meeting since they were sworn-in in January.

The initiative for a safer neighborhood was already being implemented during the time of former council chair Ramon Camacho, who visited schools during PTA meetings to discuss the Neighborhood Watch program.

The Adopt-a-Place program encourages residents to adopt areas of villages to clean up as a way to revitalize and beautify these areas for both residents and visitors.

For more information, visit them at the Hon. Pedro T. Nakatsukasa Memorial Building in Chalan Kanoa or contact 664-2700/2701. ***(Jayson Camacho)***

JKPL

From Page 1

They demanded his resignation and a formal investigation into his ethics, behavior, and finances as executive director.

Saipan Tribune tried but failed to reach Gonzales as of press time. He had declined comment to local media in the morning, citing personnel regulations.

Staff came together in the library's parking lot in protest, after walking out of the library a little before 10am.

Around 11pm, CNMI Library Council members Soledad Tenorio and council member Rufin B. Inos arrived to inquire into what was happening. Council member Frank Villagomez later joined them. They then proceeded inside the library to speak with Gonzales.

After 12pm, Villagomez stepped out of the library and, on behalf of the board, asked to meet with the staff. The staff made clear that they did not want to go back inside with Gonzales still there; they were accommodated.

Council chair Mark Rabauliman showed up later with Office of Personnel Management's Andrew Orsini. The library reopened after 2:30pm, after the board and staff agreed that they would continue to work and meet again on Monday at 9:30am.

Staff said the walkout was not planned but was triggered after a shouting match between an employee and Gonzales during an informal staff meeting in the morning.

Tension had been building, the staff said, between them and the director over the years.

The staff claimed that Gonzales had read a copy of the JKPL's transition report to the governor, where they confidentially had aired their grievances against him in oral testimony to the transition team who led the report.

"He told us he has a copy," an employee said. "Now he is retaliating."

"Tensions have been building over the months here at the [JKPL]," Technical Services librarian Rosalyn Ajoste said. "Staff are unhappy with the leadership of the director. They feel that there is a climate of fear, a toxic environment, fear of retaliation if we were to speak up and say anything—things kind of came to a head this morning…Tensions escalated into a shouting match between him and one of our employees and it was just too much to take."

Ray Deleon Guerrero, who has been with the library for seven years, said the meeting yesterday morning was unexpected. "It did not go well," he said.

Ajoste added that they "we're all in this together" and that Gonzales had "brought it upon himself."

She said staff has been coming to her for months with their concerns but it seems that the director "doesn't really listen to staff."

Erlinda Naputi, who has been at the library for 23 years, and Celina Foreman, who has been there for nine years, were also part of the protesters, save for one who remained inside.

Staff alleged that a constant under Gonzales leadership was reprimand letters, final warnings for insubordination, his "hand in their face," his "slamming tables," and "lavish trips" routed by his secretary.

Naputi claimed that there has been "no financial reports during staff meetings."

Naputi was the staff that had spoken heatedly with Gonzales that morning. She told *Saipan Tribune* it stemmed from Gonzales saying that her paid leave for Pacific Islands Association of Libraries last November would not be recognized.

Naputi claimed that both she and Gonzales filed for leave on the same day on Nov. 7.

When told this, Gonzales then said her travel authority had not been routed, adding that "it was your job" to do so, according to Naputi.

Naputi claimed that Gonzales had his TA routed by his secretary that paid for ticket, food, car rental, and room, and was also routed to Japan and Malaysia.

Staff said Gonzales had told them that "whoever makes fundraising can go" to the conference.

Naputi said she had raised personal funds, filed leave on the same day as Gonzales did, but yet was told her leave would not be recognized.

Both Deleon Guerrero and Naputi said that Gonzales goes to off-island training but never shares information or present it to staff, yet requires them to do so.

Staff also questioned his personnel decision regarding ex-employee Victoria Cabrera who they felt was pressured to resign because Gonzales would not accommodate her maternity leave.

Saipan Tribune spoke to Cabrera, who was at home taking care of her newborn after giving birth on Jan. 29. She said she resigned "because they could not accommodate six weeks [of maternity leave] on doctors orders."

The six weeks would have ended March 9, she said, but she was given until Feb. 7.

She said Gonzales could not accommodate her and told her immediate supervisor, Ray Deleon Guerrero, to write termination letter because "Gonzales didn't want to do it."

"I'm shocked but I'm not surprised because I know what's been going," she said when asked to comment on the protest.

Staff said they would like a "formal investigation" into Gonzales' use of petty cash, education tax credit funding, and purchase orders, among others.

In a phone interview after the library reopened, Ajoste said the staff maintain their position and prefer that Gonzales resign, but the board had urged the staff to find a resolution to the issue in "the most peaceful way possible."

The board and staff "all agreed" to meet again on Monday, she said.

She said she understands due process but "it took today to bring this issue to light."

According to her, the board said they needed to clarify and "find out their roles and how they can approach" the issue, and emphasized that they "need to be very careful" and "not do anything hasty."

It is unclear as of now whether the board acts only in an advisory capacity, and if rules and regulations leave it up to Gov. Eloy S. Inos to decide on the matter.

According to acting press secretary Ivan Blanco, the governor is aware of the situation and is waiting to receive more information from the JKPL board.

MHS

From Page 1

has lost five teachers this school year, but only two have been replaced. Because of a systemic shortage of substitute teachers, students are placed in the school cafeteria without instruction during class time for weeks.

"For the past two weeks I haven't been learning anything. Ever since February 2nd, I've been sitting in the cafeteria doing nothing. Which is not what I like. I come to school to learn. Where are our substitute teachers? …I do not like the fact that they transferred me into a U.S. History class. I already took U.S. History in my freshmen year," wrote one student, Karay Fitial.

One student explained in a phone interview that they decided to voice their dismay over a school that they felt had teachers that were "overworked." She said students had been waiting for weeks in the "cafeteria doing nothing."

"When teachers are absent, [students are] put into our school's cafeteria for the day," another student wrote. "To supervise them, they take one of the teachers to watch over them. He or she has to take precious instructional time away from their classes."

In their letters, some students questioned where PSS money was going. Cabrera explained that students may not know the "bigger picture" and think that "money is money" even if local and federal dollars can be only spent in certain areas.

"We are doing what we can with what we have… I am also frustrated. I want students to have instruction and I don't want to overload classes but when resources are limited you make the best with what you have."

May of the letters questioned PSS' priorities, saying the motto "Students First" does not seem to reflect what is actually happening in classrooms.

Saipan Tribune will publish the students' letters in succeeding days.

OPA

From Page 1

more time and ordered them to return to court on March 18 at 1:30pm for a status conference.

Wiseman recently granted Hasselback's motion to reconsider the dismissal of the criminal charges against Fitial. In granting the motion, the judge basically reinstated four of the 13 criminal charges against the former governor.

In an interview after the hearing, Nutting said after Wiseman made his decision to at least partially reconsider his earlier order, the judge set the status conference for yesterday to get the case moving again.

Nutting said he has not been able to speak with Hasselback much because of his schedule.

"I want to work with him a little bit to see what we can do to maybe resolve the matter short of trial if that's all possible," the lawyer said.

Nutting said almost in every case that is pending, the person prosecuting the case and the person defending him try to work together to see if something can be done short of trial.

"And that's exactly what we're going to do," he said.

Nutting said he hasn't had a chance to speak with Fitial until yesterday when he told him what exactly they are going to do in the proceeding.

"He sounded well. He's heading to San Diego [from the Philippines] to have some more medical work done on his back. But he sounded in good spirits," the lawyer said.

Nutting said he has not talked with Fitial either whether he is willing to enter into some sort of non-trial disposition or not.

"If he wants to go all the way forward to vindicate himself, the answer is it's going to be up to him. And I don't know what that is," he said.

Hasselback disclosed that he and Nutting spoke beforehand on what they think might be constructive before they get a trial date.

When asked if OPA has offered Fitial a plea agreement, Hasselback said that is something he is not prepared to discuss publicly.

"As you heard in court today, we are discussing. Mr. Nutting and I are discussing some options but I am not prepared to discuss the details," he added.

The remaining four charges against Fitial refer to alleged criminal activity associated with the police escort provided former attorney general Edward T. Buckingham in August 2012 that shielded him from being served with penal summons.

Former teacher arrested for alleged possession of 'ice'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Former Tinian teacher and mixed martial artist George Yoshimoto Manglona Jr. led law enforcers on a chase at the Saipan International Airport late Monday afternoon before being arrested for alleged possession of 10.1 gross grams of methamphetamine or "ice."

Manglona, 31, who also has a prior service with the U.S. Army, was taken to Superior Court yesterday for his initial appearance on a charge of illegal possession of a controlled substance.

His bail was set at $2,500 cash and $22,500 in appearance bond.

Preliminary hearing will be on Feb. 24 at 1:30pm. Arraignment will be at the Tinian Courthouse on March 13 at 9am.

Chief Public Defender Douglas Hartig was appointed counsel for Manglona. Assistant attorney general Shannon Foley appeared for the government.

Police detective Jeffrey I. Norita stated in his report that operatives of the Department of Public Safety's Special Operation Section and the Drug Enforcement Administration Task Force did a controlled buy-walk operation against Manglona for "ice" on Tinian last Friday but nothing came out of it.

On Sunday night, Norita said he received information from a police officer that Manglona had left Tinian and was on Saipan to obtain "ice." The police officer reportedly received the tip from a "cooperating source" on Tinian.

On Monday, SOS and DEA operatives learned that Manglona was scheduled to fly back to Tinian at 6pm that same day.

SOS and DEA operatives set up a surveillance operation at the Saipan commuter terminal and waited for Manglona. At 5:30pm, a DEA Task Force member spotted him at the terminal and approached him.

As the DEA Task Force member was trying to talk to Manglona, the defendant walked out of the terminal and ran toward the main terminal area and main terminal parking lot.

The DEA Task Force member and another officer as well as K-9 units chased Manglona on foot toward the parking lot of the Francisco C. Ada International Airport, where he was apprehended at 5:42pm.

While running, Manglona was seen throwing items from a small blue bag.

The four pursuing officers and K-9 units procured Manglona's belongings, including a small bag containing four baggies with crystalline substances that later tested presumptive positive for "ice."

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CHCC to submit business plan 'soon'

By JOEL D. PINAROC
joel_pinaroc@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Muna

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. is being asked to present a business plan that will hopefully shed more light on the corporation's status.

After a lengthy meeting with lawmakers on Capital Hill on Wednesday, CHCC chief executive officer Esther *Muña* promised to send them the business plan "soon."

Muña said the business plan "is already there and only needs a review" and further comments before she sends it to the lawmakers.

Muña did not give an exact date as to when she plans to turn over the business plan.

Lawmakers summoned Muña and other key executives to Capital Hill for a joint meeting on health care.

There were discussions on the status of health centers on Rota and Tinian, but the questions from lawmakers centered on the financial status of CHCC and its proposed plans to bail itself out of its financial woes.

The CHCC was established in 2011, and based on an audit report for fiscal year 2012, still "needs to strengthen its financial reporting." The audit report also recommended that the CHCC come up with a business plan.

The business plan is widely expected to contain how CHCC will address most, if not all, questions regarding its financial and management plans.

Muña said that despite its financial difficulties, the CHCC cannot just shut down its hospitals and health centers.

"The main concern really is funding," the executive said, emphasizing that with more support, the CHCC can finally be "in the black" after operating at a loss for years.

Sen. Teresita A. Santos (R-Rota) said the lawmakers will wait for the business plan and will sit down and discuss it.

Santos, who chairs the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare, said the meeting on Wednesday will only be one of the many meetings that lawmakers will have with the CHCC executives.

Lawmakers will hold a separate meeting today with the CHCC board of directors to take up the issue about transforming the corporation's advisory board into a governing one, which is the subject of a bill that Santos recently prefiled at the Senate.

NMC board chief hopes to push facility reconstruction project

By DENNIS B. CHAN
dennis_chan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Northern Marianas College Board of Regent chair Frank Rabauliman looks forward to exploring financing options to help the college push through with its facility reconstruction.

He called a recent dialogue with U.S. Department of Agriculture area director Joseph Diego for a loan "exciting." He said the college has taken important steps in addressing facility improvement, and that he is glad they are involving other grant agencies to help "realize the huge investments" in college reconstruction.

But he also said it would "not be an easy walk in the park," and may require creative financing on the college's part and constant dialogue with grant agencies and government.

The USDA rural economic development loan would have an "excellent interest rate" of 3.75 percent, according to college president Dr. Sharon Hart earlier.

But she also said the loan's availability would depend on ensuring in the long run that a repayment source is identified for a loan that usually maxes out at around 35 to 40 years.

"The important thing for us is coming up with a plan and sitting down with our local leaders—especially the governor and the Legislature—to really get into those discussions about the future campus of NMC," she had said.

The college has not undergone major reconstruction since it was built on or about 1955 as a single story, semi-concrete hospital.

Kilili: We need to keep DHS open

Along with all 192 members of the Democratic Caucus, Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan is sponsoring legislation that would continue funding for the Department of Homeland Security for the rest of fiscal year 2015. Unless a funding bill passes Congress and is signed by the President by Feb. 27 the department faces a shutdown.

"Homeland Security agencies play a critical role in the Northern Mariana Islands economy," Sablan explained. "USCIS is responsible for allowing tourists to enter from China. CBP mans the border. TSA assures the security of flights. The Coast Guard is protecting our waters from illegal fishing and ensuring marine safety.

"And all of those agencies employ people who live here in the Northern Marianas and deserve to be paid for their hard work," Sablan stated.

"That is why I have signed on to H.R. 861. The bill simply funds the Department of Homeland Security for the rest of the fiscal year, protecting our economy and all those jobs."

H.R. 861 does not contain any of the policy riders that have caused a legislative stalemate between the House and the Senate over the last several weeks and that threaten to shut down the department.

House Republicans passed a funding bill in January that would override President Obama's decision to hold off on deporting people who were brought into the country illegally when they were children or who are the parents of U.S. citizens. But the bill is blocked in the Senate.

"The way to solve these policy disagreements is for Congress to pass comprehensive immigration legislation that protects the borders, addresses the status of 11 million people who are in the U.S. illegally, and provides the workers that agriculture and the high tech industry need," Sablan said, "not by refusing to fund the agency that is supposed to keep us all safe."

In addition, to assuring that Homeland Security and its employees can continue their work in the Northern Marianas, H.R. 861, the bill Sablan is cosponsoring, provides the Commonwealth government with funding through the Port Security Grant Program, the Emergency Management Performance Grant, the State Homeland Security Program, and various competitive grants. ***(Office of the Delegate)***

New deputy AG Tenorio: Job requires great deal of work, but very satisfying

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Saipan lawyer Lillian A. Tenorio stated yesterday that serving as a deputy attorney general requires a great deal of work along with some challenges but that she finds it "very satisfying, gratifying."

Tenorio said it is an excellent opportunity for her to get back into public service and doing the best she can working for the first elected attorney general, Edward Manibusan, and working on fulfilling the objectives he has set out for the office.

Tenorio

In his remarks at his swearing in, Manibusan vowed to establish the Office of the Attorney General as the best law firm not only in the Commonwealth but also in the region.

"That's tall order but we're making progress to that effect," Tenorio said.

As Manibusan's deputy, Tenorio said she has multiple tasks: from the administrative side of the office to reviewing their legal work, some of the opinions that go out, and some of the legal issues that come before the office.

"I oversee all of that," she said.

Tenorio is still a member of the Micronesian Legal Services board of directors, which provides legal representations and services to indigent people in civil cases.

Prior to her appointment as deputy AG last month, Tenorio had been in private practice for a little over 10 years in a variety of cases.

Before that, she was in public service, working for the CNMI Legislature for several years.

Tenorio said when the opportunity came to join the Office of the Attorney General, she jumped at the chance to get back into public service where her passion really is.

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUTS

Happy birthday Britney Nicole! With all the highlights in life, you are an inspiration in our life. Happy birthday and lots more to come your way! With love, Daddy, Mommy, and Bryanna Mae.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Belated happy 5th birthday to Bernadette Joyce "Nene" Montano, who celebrated her special day on Feb. 17! May you have more birthdays to come and stay happy. Be a good girl. Greetings come from *Kuya* Janvir and family.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Special Section

Are you ready for the Chinese Year of the Sheep?

By RHONDA ABRAMS
USA TODAY

Hold your horses, small business owners—it's time for the Chinese New Year. So, "Gung hay fat choy," which is the traditional new year's greeting. Loosely translated, it means, "Congratulations, and may you have a prosperous new year." Get ready to welcome the Year of the Sheep.

Throughout the Asian world, the Chinese—or lunar—new year is a big deal. New Year's Day officially occurs on Feb. 19, but similar to the Christmas holidays in the Western world, celebrations and festivities occur over a few weeks.

The Chinese new year is rich with traditions, one of which is to associate each new year with a specific animal. There are 12 animals in the Chinese zodiac, and trends for the coming year are predicted to align with the traits of that year's animal.

2015 is the Year of the Sheep, though sometimes referred to as the year of the goat or ram. After a runaway Year of the Horse in 2014, the Year of the Sheep promises a calmer, more secure and predictable time. This year can be a very auspicious—though not dramatic—year for small business. Sheep years bring success to those who use intelligence, creativity, tenacity and teamwork over sheer force or dynamism.

The Year of the Sheep is also the eighth year of the twelve-year Chinese zodiac cycle. In Asian culture, eight is a lucky number (as seven is considered a lucky number in Western culture)—so this is expected to be a year of particular good fortune.

Another characteristic of sheep that bodes well for your small business is that sheep produce wool, which replenishes every year. So this year, pay particular attention to developing customers who will produce recurring revenue. Can you create a subscription basis for your product or service? Can you create "wool" that you can shear over and over?

What type of entrepreneurs and small business owners should benefit in a Year of the Sheep?

■ First, this should be an auspicious year for "sheep-like" entrepreneurs. Don't take that as an insult. Many are fooled by sheep's soft, fluffy exterior, but underneath sheep are tough and resilient even if they don't attract a lot of attention to themselves. Does that describe you? If so, you're in for a banner year.

■ The sheep is also considered the most feminine of the Chinese zodiac animals, so it should be a promising year for women entrepreneurs. So all you females out there who have been thinking about starting or growing a business, now's the time to go for it.

■ In the Chinese zodiac, sheep people are also associated with creativity and the arts. So, this should be a favorable year for entrepreneurs and small business owners who are engaged in creative endeavors, whether involved in traditional arts and music—or the creativity of designing a new mobile app, handbag or hairstyle.

■ If you're the kind of entrepreneur who works well in teams, this should be a good year for your small or growing business. You may have noticed that sheep seem to be happy hanging out in herds.

Now, let me be clear, I'm not a believer in astrology. But I have found that many of the characteristics attributed to the animals associated with different years of the Chinese zodiac have mirrored what has happened in my own company. For instance:

■ 2009 was the Year of the Ox. It was the height of the Great Recession, and in we found we could succeed by especially hard work, plowing new lines of business to muscle through bad times. That worked.

■ 2010 was a tiger year—and all that hard work in the ox year paid off. It was one of the best years in my company. Everything came our way.

■ 2014. Last year, a horse year was marked by being pulled in many different directions, a feeling of things rushing by. The challenge was for us to rein in our opportunities and ideas.

Personally, I'm looking forward to a sheep year. I hope it will be much calmer than last year, with more stability, greater teamwork, exciting creativity, all leading to higher recurring revenue. Baa, baa, black sheep … we're hoping for much more than three bags full.

'Heat map' captures massive Chinese New Year migration

BEIJING (AP)—This map of China's Lunar New Year travel tells a story of massive migration home from the big city.

The interactive, updating graphic posted online by the Chinese Internet portal Baidu shows a "heat map" of lines tracing the trips of individual travelers. The brightest spokes emanate from eastern employment hubs Beijing, Shanghai and the southern nexus of Shenzhen, Guangzhou and Dongguan.

About 80 million people were traveling on Monday alone, mostly by road, according to government estimates. Baidu was able to illustrate many of those journeys thanks to the 350 million active users of its smartphone map and other apps that use location positioning.

If someone uses a Baidu app in Beijing in the morning, then pings from the southwestern city of Kunming in the evening, a new trip will be registered and a straight line added from Beijing to Kunming.

Lines glow white-hot during the biggest travel days of the holiday, which officially runs from Wednesday through Feb. 24 but unofficially includes many days on either end. The period of heightened travel is considered 40 days long.

"You're basically looking at the serious intensity of travel in this holiday. It's not just the world's biggest human migration, it's the biggest mammalian migration," Baidu spokesman Kaiser Kuo said. "It's a sight to behold. It's quite miraculous that nothing goes terribly wrong."

The Baidu Migration interactive also includes data for individual cities, airports and train stations, and could help transportation officials plan future seasons, Kuo said.

If he used Baidu apps, 28-year-old Li Shengtao would have contributed to the Baidu interactive when he departed by train from Shanghai where he works as an interior designer for his annual, 1,100-kilometer journey to his northern hometown of Shijiazhuang.

"Even if you don't manage to buy a ticket you have to get home somehow," Li said. "That's the tradition of us northern Chinese."

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4:20 PM SUN LEADER MARKET
4:30 PM DOLLAR DAYS
4:50 PM MICRO BEACH HOTEL
5:00 PM FIESTA RESORT & SPA
5:30 PM SAIPAN ADVENTURE
5:45 PM ISHOP
6:30 PM HYATT REGENCY
7:00 PM I LOVE SAIPAN
7:30 PM STREET MARKET
8:00 PM DUTY FREE
9:00 PM WORLD RESORT

What's in store for you in the Year of the Sheep?

By TRISHA MACAS
GMA NEWS

The Lunar New Year today ushers in a new animal sign: the Year of the Sheep (or the Goat, or the Ram). Believers might want to check out feng shui expert Hanz Cua's thoughts on how the Wooden Sheep might affect them in terms of career, health, relationships, and wealth. Look for your birth year below:

Rat (1924, 1936, 1948, 1960, 1972, 1984, 1996, 2008)

Career: The Year of the Sheep is not a good year to change your job. Better to keep a low profile at work. This year, stress will be a main concern. Avoid any friction with your boss.

Health: You should be careful of driving and travels. Road accidents are likely to happen; injuries may occur as well. Those born in the year of the Rat should also watch out for stomach problems.

Relationships: This may not be a year of love for the people of the year of the Rat. If you're in a relationship, be careful of any third party and make sure to resolve any arguments with your partners.

Wealth: Money comes easily and the opportunities are open for side jobs. When it comes to investing, be on the conservative side; be cautious to avoid risks.

Ox (1925, 1937, 1949, 1961, 1973, 1985, 1997, 2009)

Career: This year will bring many challenges to the Ox's career, like miscommunication with your boss, for example. Despite all of these, stay calm when talking to your business constituents and clients. 2015 is also not a good year to change business or work.

Health: The Ox should not delay any medical treatment. So, start the year with an annual physical exam. You should also follow a proper diet and a strict workout.

Relationships: For single male Ox, romance will be elusive this year. Meanwhile, married couples should be more tolerant and understanding with each other.

Wealth: It's generally a good year in terms of wealth for the Ox. Although money may not be your big problem, you should still be careful with your spending.

Tiger (1926, 1938, 1950, 1962, 1986, 1998, 2010)

Career: The Year of the Sheep will bring strong support luck from your boss. But it'll be hard work and pressure that'll push you to be successful.

Health: Stress and work-related pressure will weaken your immune system. But luck is on your side. You will find a good and capable doctor.

Relationships: Single Tigers will meet someone special. Married couples will have a blissful relationship this year.

Wealth: Tigers should learn to save; money comes easily, but it can also easily slip away.

Rabbit (1927, 1939, 1951, 1963, 1975, 1987, 1999, 2011)

Career: Improve your interpersonal skills with your co-workers. Going to dinner after work and socializing with office mates can be very beneficial. You need to build strong bonds with each other.

Health: Your health this year is not that strong, so try to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Be careful of stomachache and diarrhea, and be watchful of what you eat. Avoid any risky sports that may lead to serious injuries.

Relationships: Be careful with what you say and be more sensitive; you have a tendency to offend your partner, which may ruin your relationship.

Wealth: This will be a prosperous year with lots of financial improvement. Expect salary increase and bonuses because of hitting your quota. You also have plenty of luck with property and stocks. Be warned: Avoid being greedy.

Dragon (1940, 1952, 1964, 1976, 1988, 2000, 2012)

Career: The Dragon will shine in their chosen careers this year. There is an opportunity of being pirated by another company. It is better to choose a better job. Be more confident when dealing with your work.

Health: There will be no major health issue this year. But, learning meditation enhances well-being and handling stress.

Relationships: It's a good year for romance for the Dragon this year! Any disputes over your relationship can be easily resolved. However, be careful since you are prone to gossip and back-stabbers who will be jealous of your blooming love life.

Wealth: This year, you will enjoy more salary increases and bonuses. The Dragon's wealth will improve immensely this year, which will enable you to enjoy the finer things in life.

Snake (1941, 1953, 1965, 1977, 1989, 2001, 2013)

Career: Promotion is just around the corner. Take advantage of all the helpful people at work who are willing to help you accomplish tasks. But make sure to repay favors and build bonds with them.

Health: Snakes should be careful for they will be prone to accidents and injuries. Take extra precaution especially when driving.

Relationships: Single Snakes will need extra effort to find the right partner.

Wealth: You should place your money in long-term investment. It is a good year to pay all debts and settle all accounts while the resources are available.

Horse (1942, 1954, 1966, 1978, 1990, 2002, 2014)

Career: Work is challenging this year for the Horse. Make sure to do and finish one task at a time. You need to focus and not to let their work pile up.

Health: There will be minor health problems. Seek medical treatment immediately to prevent serious illness.

Relationships: Romance is strong this year. Those who are single and looking for the perfect partner have a good chance of finding the right one who can be their long-time partner.

Wealth: There will be financial losses this year. It is best to monitor your finances and control expenses. You may also be cheated.

Sheep or Goat (1943, 1955, 1967, 1979, 1991, 2003, 2015)

Career: The Sheep should avoid being too assertive; instead, just follow instructions from your boss. Be smart in your strategy and approach. Try to think things over before doing it.

Health: Learn to relax by going to vacations. Leisurely travel is a big help to de-stress. Relax and keep calm by making trips to peaceful places.

Relationships: Those who are still single will need to have extra effort in finding the right relationship. Marriages are prone to misunderstandings.

Wealth: Prepare for rainy days: setting aside some money may prove very useful. Extra work effort is also needed.

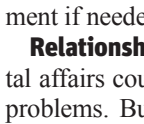
Monkey (1944, 1956, 1968, 1980, 1992, 2004, 2016)

Career: This year, you have a promising career. Expect to improve at work, gain support and guidance from peers especially the opposite sex.

Health: Too much work makes the Monkey neglect his health. Follow a balanced diet and exercise. Sufficient sleep and rest is also necessary to keep illnesses and stress at bay.

Relationships: For the single men, this year may be a good year to find love. Mingling with the people may be a first step to a successful relationship.

Wealth: Avoid risky business as well as short-term investment.



Rooster (1945, 1957, 1969, 1981, 1993, 2005, 2017)

Career: Good planning and strategy will help you overcome any obstacles at work. Prepare for major changes and delays at work. Make sure there is enough time to meet deadlines.

Health: Avoid any aggressive activity or sports that can lead to accidents and injuries. Do relaxing exercises instead.

Relationships: Single Roosters need extra effort to find love. Meanwhile, married couples need to spend more time together.

Wealth: Financial luck is poor this year. It is best to keep a low profile to avoid any losses.

Dog (1946, 1958, 1970, 1982, 1994, 2006, 2018)

Career: The Dog needs to maintain a low profile at work as there may be trouble that could jeopardize your chance for advancement. Your boss may recognize your efforts this year.

Health: You will be susceptible to illnesses. Maintain the right weight through exercise and seek early medical treatment if needed.

Relationships: Extra marital affairs could lead to serious problems. But, if you are single, there is a strong chance of finding the right one this year.

Wealth: This is an excellent year to improve your finances. Keep your eyes on opportunities but avoid being impulsive.

Pig (1947, 1959, 1971, 1983, 1995, 2007, 2019)

Career: Backstabbers are going to attack you this year. Since you have supportive stars coming into your chart, you can expect helpful friends at work.

Health: Do low-impact exercises and avoid aggressive sports.

Relationships: The Year of the Sheep promises a harmonious relationship for the Pig. For couples, it is a good year to get married. Those who are single should be more proactive so they can easily find the right partner.

Wealth: Businessmen and self-employed individuals will bring in profitable returns.

DIVISION OF COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Caller Box 10007, Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality (BECQ) Office,
Middle Road, Gualo Rai, Saipan MP 96950
TEL. NO. 664-8300 FAX NO. 664-8315

NOTICE OF APPLICATION
February 18 2015

THE FOLLOWING IS A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF COASTAL PERMIT APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY THE CRM OFFICES:

APPLICANT	DATE APPLICATION RECEIVED	APPLICATION PROJECT DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	TYPE	STATUS
1. Imperial Pacific International (CNMI), LLC	02/05/2015 SMS-2015-X-006	Archaeological Recovery	Garapan	Major Siting	Under Review
2. Nenpou Shinkyou Buddhist Denomination	02/10/2015 SSm-2015-X-008	Gyosei & Miuta Monuments	Marpi	Shoreline APC	Approved (02/18/2015)*

Require all permit applications to be published in a local newspaper within 15 days of receipt of application. The list reflects recently received permit applications and those with a recent change in status. New applications are marked with an asterisk (*).

The Public is invited to submit written comments regarding any of the above projects for which a permit decision has not been issued. All permit comments should identify the project by application number. Your comments should be mailed or hand-delivered to the DCRM Office. All persons who desire a public hearing regarding any project may do so by submitting a written request for a public hearing to the DCRM Office within fourteen (14) days for minor permits (APC's) and proposed amended major sitings. Public Hearings are required for all new major siting projects. All public hearing notices are published in a local newspaper of general circulation. Residents of Rota and Tinian may submit comments and hearing requests to their local DCRM Coordinator. Persons wishing to retain the right to appeal a DCRM Permit decision must file a notice of appeal with the DCRM office within thirty (30) days of the issuance of the DCRM permit decision as provided in Part 200 § 15-10-235 of the DCRM Regulations.

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Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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EDITORIAL

Time for a united Arab military response on jihadis

Once again, the world is shocked by another mass atrocity committed by jihadis using flames, bullets and swords to force their warped interpretation of Islam on others. Islamic State loyalists in Libya released a video of fighters lining up 21 Egyptian Coptic Christians along a Mediterranean beach and simultaneously beheading them.

Unlike in conventional wars, where each side fights to degrade and demoralize the enemy into negotiating peace terms, the Islamic State fighters offer no room for discussion. It's their way or death. The execution videos they post online are intended to horrify as many people as possible—Muslims and nonbelievers.

In America, we enjoy an ocean's breadth of safety and the most powerful military in the world to protect us, yet the horror still prompts gut reactions of outrage. For Muslims in the Arab world and western Asia, the margin of safety is razor thin. Leaders in countries where Islamic State activity is growing—including Pakistan, Jordan, Egypt and those in the Arabian Peninsula—can no longer deny the threat at their doorsteps.

The choices have rarely been this stark. Those leaders must summon the courage and muster the popular support required to confront the jihadis militarily, or the Islamic State will bring the battle to them.

Egypt's military-dominated government, which has harshly stifled free speech and conducted mass arrests to curtail even moderate Islamic sentiment, responded to the Copts' beheadings with a wave of airstrikes Monday on suspected Islamic State bases in Libya. Jordan responded with airstrikes this month after the Islamic State executed a captured Jordanian air force pilot by burning him alive inside a cage.

Going for the occasional big bang of airstrikes is no substitute for the unrelenting, sustained ground-force confrontation that must occur if the Islamic State's expansion is to be halted, especially in war-torn countries like Syria, Iraq and Libya.

In Africa, government responses have hit closer to the mark amid the rise of jihadi groups Boko Haram and al-Shabab. Countries such as Chad, Niger and Cameroon have banded together for joint ground assaults aimed at corralling Boko Haram in western Africa. The African Union nations of Kenya, Uganda, Burundi, Djibouti and Ethiopia are joining Somalia in a largely successful infantry effort to contain al-Shabab in the east.

The nations of Africa recognize that airstrikes are no substitute for a united and coordinated confrontation on the ground. Egypt's leader, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, correctly called Monday for an international response to the Islamic State's expansion. That response, however, must include a joint Arab infantry strike force as its dominant component.

If Arab leaders cannot summon the courage today to confront this enemy directly, their current problems are likely to seem trivial compared to the ones they'll face in the not-too-distant future.

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POTHOLE IN THIRTY FEET... SWITCH LANES...
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For veterans, having a home is not enough

By JOHN DOWNING
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Proposed legislation recently introduced in the Senate arrived with a name that is seemingly hard to argue against: the Homeless Veterans Welcome Home Act. It is a well-intentioned bill meant to provide support for veterans transitioning into permanent housing and to help them acquire furniture and other household items. Unfortunately, this bill is essentially window dressing that would simply leave many deserving veterans out in the cold.

On its face, the plan sounds great. It would establish a three-year pilot program to award grants to eligible organizations that would provide assistance to homeless veterans who qualify for housing approved by the Department of Veterans Affairs. A total of $5 million for three years would be appropriated for the program. Organizations would receive a maximum grant of $500,000 and eligible veterans as much as $2,500.

The problem with this proposal is one we see all too often at Soldier On, the nonprofit I lead that works with thousands of homeless veterans across the country and government entities to develop effective legislation and programs to help veterans.

The proposed Welcome Home Act tries to quantify and qualify the issue by requiring the VA to prioritize communities with the greatest need of homeless services and to seek fair geographic distribution when awarding grants. The result would be a narrowing of the potential pool of veterans who can be assisted.

On any given night, roughly 50,000 veterans are homeless, according to a recent "point in time" survey by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Through our work with the VA's Supportive Services for Veteran Families Programs, we know that as many as 200,000 veterans need health, education and employment services, and rapid rehousing.

Compounding matters is the sharp increase in the number of veterans who experience post-traumatic stress disorder. Roughly 12 percent of Gulf War veterans suffer from PTSD and upward of 20 percent of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans do, according to the National Center for PTSD. We know there is a direct correlation between PTSD and severe physical and emotional health issues, substance abuse, unemployment, marriage difficulties and, yes, homelessness.

Perhaps most shocking—or maybe not—is that the proposed bill would create more bureaucracy. Any time taxpayer money goes to the VA, 5 percent to 10 percent is allocated to administrative overhead. We would cut waste and increase our success—and maximize the effect of funding for all veterans—if veterans received these grants directly through programs that already exist, such as Supportive Services for Veteran Families Programs.

Soldier On applauds California's Democratic senators, Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer, for taking the initiative and introducing the bill to help homeless veterans. But furniture is not the first thing they need right now. Rather, it is incumbent upon Congress to enact a comprehensive support system for all veterans regardless of income or circumstance.

Such a system must offer a holistic approach if homeless veterans are to carry on healthy, productive lives in homes of their own. Essential components include mental health services, substance-abuse treatment, case management, peer support, medical and dental treatment, legal assistance, employment and educational services, and even transportation—one of the greatest barriers to veterans receiving treatment is the inability to get to doctor appointments. And the services must be delivered to veterans where they live.

This approach should also include our first-of-its-kind, limited-equity cooperative model for providing housing. Dozens of formerly homeless veterans live in the Gordon H. Mansfield Veterans Community in the Berkshires in Pittsfield, Mass. This village offers furnished one-bedroom townhomes in which veterans own an equity stake. Ownership—combined with support programs—allows these veterans to develop responsibility and leadership skills that can help them secure and retain employment and regain the dignity they deserve after sacrificing so much in service to our country.

The homes include furniture donated by BBL Hospitality, a New York-based hotel and hospitality services company. Our partnership with them is an excellent example of how the private sector can be engaged to avoid the inherent bureaucracy involved when new VA programs are created to serve one specific need. We don't need new programs—we need to make the existing ones work better and for more people.

Household furnishings are certainly a necessary component to any program designed to help homeless veterans, or those at risk of being homeless. But on its own, and as a new VA program, the Welcome Home Act would not have the necessary impact. Our nation's politicians—Democrats and Republicans alike—need to learn what really works when it comes to taking care of veterans who are living on the brink.

We can save time, money and lives by supporting full-service programs that already successfully address veterans' needs.

The lengthy list includes housing, PTSD and substance abuse counseling, transportation, healthcare and employment, all aimed squarely at those among us who were willing to don a uniform.

John Downing is chief executive of Soldier On, a nonprofit provider of local services to veterans that includes immediate and long-term housing. He wrote this for the Los Angeles Times.

Sasyan Tradision

By JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.
Special to the Saipan Tribune

John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune *and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands.*

Kumareran chagu` na lugat gi sasyan galaide` gai preparasion. I kapitan ha asegura na listugue` para ayu na biahe. Deste layag yan mantension hana fan listu para usuña yan pasaheru.

Ha tuñgu` usun mañglu` gi layag para u lagse hinanau galaide. Ha usa i luseru yan pution gi lañget an` puenge. I kilulog kurente gi ha`ane, paluma, yan pañgpañg mañglu`.

Maseha modetnu na estau `nai man-gaige hit i usun sasyan tradision asta pa`gu sumen benefisiosu usuña. Tai modetnu na trastes lau siempre u fattu gi maseñala na isla.

Gi hilu` tanu` antes, karetan guaka usun familia piot para i gualu`. Todu mantension man-makatga deste ramienta yan neñkanu` gi taftaf oga`an. Siempre u fattu gi lanchu antes de `las dies gi ega`an. Ma-disonse i guaka ya mapastu mientras sige familia machogue che`chu` gualu`. I mismu sasyan mana setbe gi minachum atdau para tatte gi señgsoñg.

Tat gi dos sasyan tihu chage. Banidosu-yu` sa` huli`e usuña galaide` yan karetan guaka gi kinalamten familia.. Este na ineyag yan hafa siha ha apagat ham i dos sinatusan yan sumen popble na sainan mame mina` fitme i pisu gi dos adeñghu. Siha muna` fitme i espiritu gi masimientun kabales na linala` yan disposision patgon natibu.

Ginen ayu na gualu`--usun i edda`--`nai hu komprende hafa i natibu na satton relasioña yan i tanu` kontodu tasi. Estague` i dos lugat `nai gaige espiritun guelu yan guela ni umestablese riku yan fitme na kuttura yan tradision Chamorro.

Ni haf` taimanu gaige hale` yan pogse` fitme na espiritun natibu guine gi dos lugat. Tatnai in` repara na gigon baba i kinalamten ensegidas ta falague i gualu` yan tasi? Na ti kulan silensiu na mensahe ginen man-mofona na mauleg ta bisita tatte manu `nai gaige hale`ta pot satbasion?

Bisita hatdin familia

Yangin chatkomprende i tautau pot siknifikasion tanu` yan natibu mauleg u egaga` umestudiaye este na asuntun pot kinemprende haf` tinate-ta.

I manadan mattirun tinilaika deste finagpu` geran dos fumunas relasionta yan tradisionta gi modun linala`ta. Maseha masusede este chatmiyu fan malelefa ni riku na tradision natibu ni inestablesen guelu yan guela. Tat mas fitme ke haf` pinegan niha para hita.

Pot ihemplo: `An guaha probleman batkon katga ginen lagu menos pugas yan mantension siha gi tenda. `Nai ni mona ni tatte siempre un` aligau haf` guaha gi gualu`. Poresu na maseha adumididi` cha`mu ti umoffisiona mananom para `an tiempun pagyu `sino chata`an.

`An katma i tasi ya peskadot hau, usune mañgone para mantension mattiempu. Todu i tiempu pot preparasion i tita lili`e mamamaila` na ta chochogue haf` presisu pot no u gacha` hit induktu. I tautau man-lolotge hanom gi tiempun uchan.

Mauleg ta ta`lun umestablese hatdin familia. Esta namatman `an mattu mattiru ya gaige nesessidatmu gi tinanom-mu kamute, sune, choda yan golai gi hatdin familia.

Areglon Tasi

Sige hu akanteha haf` na matai i mattiñgan deste Obyan, Afetña yan Chalan Piao. Appenas guihan guine siha na tasi. Kau usun deris, dinamita yan binenu na attifisiu pumunu` i rubentason (reef)?

Ayu ha` kulan asientadu na tasi immidiatmente lichen pantalan Susupe. Gi ge`lichan haf` na kandadu entalu` i inai yan rubentason. Hasan tali`e tropan guihan. Guaha `nai anog tarakitu `an ume`eboka. Taya` otru fuera de este.

Hana` matmanyu` lokue` un` talayeru (ti natibu) ni ha dadadagau talayaña de hemunos kau gaige i guihan. Buyadan tasi yan unai ha batsala halom. Lau mauleg tana` ma-atan haf` guaha na kulan man-matai todu kinalamten gi rubentason este siha na lugat.

Kanastran Konbetsasion

Huna` listu gi un` botsiyu mama`hu deste fotte na pugua` ugam, pupulu, kalerun afog, yan amaska. Era, hagas hu faisen un` kompaireghu unu gi dos paireña gayu. Sen tiha ho`ye-yu` guihe na finatoghu. Debi bai` eluye fina`n laime para bai` pula` mahetog sensiaña.

`Nai ha tutuhon sumomukegue ni mama` sige ham dispues kumonbetsasion. Uttimoña hana`eyu` ni finaisenhu kontodu puyitos i paire. Ayu `nai hu komprende usun kanastran mama` gi tutuhon konbetsasion bisita antes gi gima` mañaina-ta. Kulan kanastran para un` pula` hila`mu `an esta nina` bulachu ñaihon hau ni mama`.

■■■

Estaba un` patgon yan pisau tañgantañgan gi kanton unai sige umesuette. Mientras tantos, hu faisen kau guaha esta kinine`ña. Chumaleg ya ilegña taya` trabiha. Hoben idatña lau `an esta umeyag maseha peskan tupag pisau siempre u fañgone` para mantensioña para mona.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

When will students 'be' first?

Throughout all four years of high school, our Marianas High School campus has seen too many great teachers and staff members leave for more rewarding positions; factors that are out of the students' control.

Currently, MHS has three counselors (which means about 300 or more students are assigned to just one counselor), one maintenance staff, one security guard, and a declining amount of teachers. There are 1,500 or more students attending our school, but too many of them spend their instructional time sitting around in our cafeteria. In truth, our cafeteria holds more teacherless students during class time than it does hungry students at lunch time.

Where are the substitute teachers? Why is PSS unable to hire any more staff members?

Our Public School System flaunts around their agenda to improve schools under the motto "Students First" but only takes action on matters that please the media. "Public First, Students Later" is the true motto.

Why does PSS not have enough money to afford more teacher and staff member, roles crucial to the education of students and enrichment of our community, but can afford to build a gymnasium down at Kobler Elementary School? Why doesn't Marianas High School have a legitimate, on campus A.P. Literature class? Why do students have to attend schools only in their villages? Why do we have only one maintenance man cleaning up a whole campus? Why do we have so few counselors?

As a senior, I need my counselor throughout most of my college application process. But they're usually unavailable and/or have too many other students to attend to.

And lastly, will there ever be solutions to our campus' as well as many other campuses' growing problems? Or will PSS stifle our rights to education further? When will students actually BE first?

Krisha Marie Balolong
Marianas High School

Keep our priorities straight

We heard a U.S. Government class is going to merge with AP U.S. History. This seems unfair to both of the classes. Some students may have already took either of the classes so efficiency for both classes will drop. Why can't our government provide more money to PSS instead of money to just dig a hole and fill it up again. There are over a thousand students in school with only three counselors and few teachers. There are over 30 students in one class, which seems not good. We can't say we are studying in a good environment. Why doesn't the government have money to support PSS so they can hire more teachers yet they have money to make traffic signals? PSS says "Students First" but they can't keep what they say.

Another problem in our school is the dirty restroom. At least the toilet should flush but that doesn't work either. PSS could use the money more wisely and fix the building and restrooms. When it rains, all the hallways are flooded and the ceiling is leaking.

All of these problems come from not spending money for the right things. If they care for students first, they should consider what they can do to help our education. Teachers can't manage 30-40 students in one class and from there, we can find some students who can't even get help from the teacher. Both PSS and our government should cooperate with each other and find the best solution for these problems.

Sophia Kim
Marianas High School

Whatever happened to 'Students First'?

We the students at MHS would like to express how angry we are to why the PSS is spending money on unnecessary things. It is ridiculous knowing that they are building a gym in Kobler when there are not enough teachers to go around. Why is there a shortage of staff? Whatever happened to "Students First"? We are angered to know that there are more important things it could be spent on. How can they build a gym when there are up to 40 students crammed into one clas, never any tissues in the restroom, or why are there two classes crammed into one class such as our A.P. U.S. History Class? Why are there two different classes crammed into one class? It is really upsetting to know that students aren't the priority anymore. The ratio of students to counselors is ridiculous. The students are not the priority anymore and it's absolutely ridiculous.

Christina Matsunaga
Marianas High School

Why atheists can claim the moral high ground

By CATHY YOUNG
NEWSDAY

As soon as the news broke that Craig Stephen Hicks, the man charged in last week's fatal shooting of three young people—all Muslims—in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, was an ardent atheist, many concluded that this was a religion-based hate crime.

The Internet was quick to react, with the right playing up the "atheist killer" angle and the left stressing anti-Muslim bigotry. In fact, the story is still developing, and the motive apparently included a parking dispute (which does not exclude religious bias as a factor). But whatever we eventually learn, one lesson of this tragedy is clear: Beware of generalizations and easy answers, especially if they support your ideological biases.

The Chapel Hill killings had a strong resonance for those who believe that terrorist acts by Islamic extremists are unjustly used to tarnish Islam and all Muslims—and that prominent atheists who single out Islam for criticism, such as British biologist Richard Dawkins, contribute to this unfair blame.

Dawkins, whom Hicks listed as a favorite author, tweeted to express his dismay at the shootings; Iranian-American writer Reza Aslan sarcastically responded that no matter how many times Dawkins condemned it, "We're just going to keep assuming you haven't and don't." It was his way of making the point that Muslims' condemnations of terrorism are routinely ignored.

University of Minnesota biologist and atheist blogger P.Z. Myers, who has often accused atheist critics of Islam of aiding anti-Muslim bigotry, also seized on the connection.

"The killer was one of us," Myers wrote on his blog, Pharyngula. "He had received the message that murdering Muslims does not expel one from the community of atheists." (Myers did not give any examples of such a message.)

And yet a more comprehensive look at the content of Hicks' Facebook page may not support the view that he had a particular animus against Muslims, as opposed to religion in general. In fact, he mocked conservative Christians who deplore radical Islam while, in his opinion, sharing a similar social agenda. He explicitly opposed what he saw as right-wing efforts to curb Muslims' religious freedom and defended the right to build a controversial mosque near Ground Zero a few years ago. There is no evidence to suggest that he was especially interested in atheist critiques of Islam.

That said, Myers may have a point when he calls for some atheist soul-searching. Too many holier-than-thou (and smarter-than-thou) atheists claim their belief system is morally superior to religion because it does not lead to murderous fanaticism. Yet in the 20th century, millions were slaughtered by communist regimes that embraced militant atheism as part of their creed.

Today, of course, there is no radical atheist terror network. But this does not make atheists immune to fanaticism or hatred toward those who believe differently than they do. Ironically, that includes Myers himself: In a blog last year discussing a Christian movie in which a fatally injured atheist professor is persuaded by two missionaries to embrace Jesus, he wrote, "Just so all you Christians know, if I'm in a fatal accident ... you try to pull that prayer-and-conversion (expletive) on me, I'm going to stab you."

There is a lot of deplorable prejudice against nonreligious people in large segments of American culture. But atheist intolerance exists as well, and (speaking as an agnostic) it can be toxic even if it does not lead to violence.

So, by all means, let's treat the Chapel Hill shootings as a lesson in humility. But let them also be a lesson in not using tragedies to score political points.

Cathy Young is a regular contributor to Reason *magazine and Real Clear Politics. She wrote this for* Newsday.

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY
Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers. Northeast winds 10 to 15 mph.
▲85° ▼73°

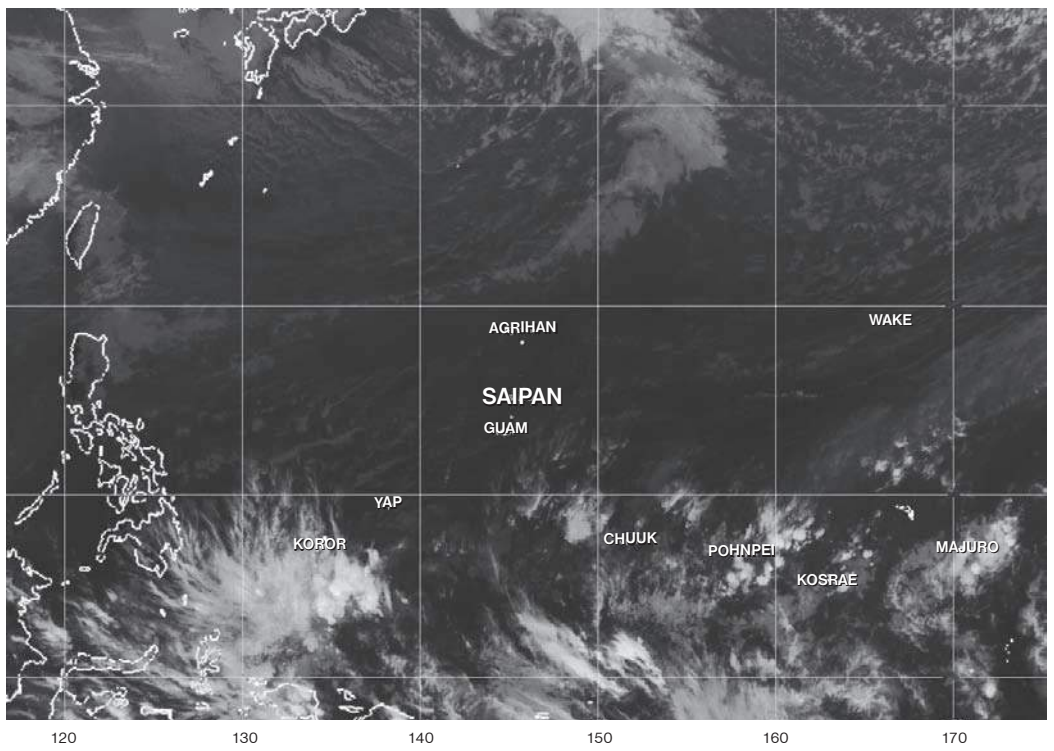
FRIDAY
Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers. Northeast winds 10 to 15 mph.
▲85° ▼74°

SATURDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲85° ▼75°

SUNDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲85° ▼75°

MONDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲85° ▼75°

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2015
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front extends southwestward from west of Minami Tori Shima at 25N150E to beyond 130E at 19N. Clouds and patchy rain are occurring along and up to 150 miles northwest of the front. Another cold front heads southwestward from near 19N180E to north of Kosrae at 11N162E then continues as a shear line to end southeast of Yap near 6N142E. Cloudiness and patchy showers are found along and up to 200 miles northwest of these features. A near-equatorial trough stretches eastward from 1N130E to a weak circulation centered south of Pohnpei at 1N158E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are present near Koror and south of Yap west of a line from 8N141E to EQ134E and south of Chuuk to near Pohnpei within 130 miles of a line from 2N144E to 2N154E to 8N160E. Weak trade-wind disturbances are generating scattered showers and a few thunderstorms east of Kosrae and near Majuro within 150 miles of a line from 4N164E to 5N180E.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

Micronesia

Guam And Rota	Partly Cloudy	▲83	▼74
Palau	Partly Cloudy	▲85	▼76
Yap	Partly Cloudy	▲84	▼76
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	▲85	▼79
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼78
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼80
Majuro	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼79

Around the Globe

Auckland	Sunny	▲80	▼61
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	▲53	▼28
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	▲68	▼61
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	▲84	▼69
London	Sunny	▲52	▼40
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	▲74	▼55
Manila	Partly Cloudy	▲85	▼72
Melbourne	Thundershowers	▲86	▼63
Miami	Partly Cloudy	▲70	▼48
New York	Mostly Cloudy	▲34	▼17
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	▲48	▼38
Paris	Mostly Cloudy	▲47	▼33
Pusan	Mostly Sunny	▲51	▼33
Rome	Sunny	▲67	▼43
Salem	Cloudy	▲58	▼42
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	▲63	▼52
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	▲47	▼28
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	▲57	▼37
Washington, DC	Snow	▲36	▼10

NMI CRIME STOPPERS
Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:
- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

Tides

Saipan Harbor

1:46 AM	Today	Low Tide:	-0.4 Feet
8:20 AM	Today	High Tide:	2.1 Feet
2:12 PM	Today	Low Tide:	0.7 Feet
7:38 PM	Today	High Tide:	2.1 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:40 AM	6:23 PM
Friday	6:40 AM	6:23 PM
Saturday	6:39 AM	6:23 PM
Sunday	6:39 AM	6:23 PM
Monday	6:38 AM	6:24 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	6:29 AM	6:39 AM
Friday	7:21 AM	7:41 AM
Saturday	8:11 AM	8:42 PM
Sunday	9:01 AM	9:41 PM
Monday	9:50 AM	10:40PM

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 5, 2015

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA5070	4:15am	5:05am	Daily
UA5068	8:00am	8:50am	3
UA5068	8:40am	9:30am	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7
UA5039	2:20pm	4:00pm	6, 7 via Rota
UA5078	3:10pm	4:00pm	1, 5
UA5038	3:10pm	4:00pm	2, 4
UA5040	6:55pm	7:45pm	1, 5
UA5078	8:35pm	9:25pm	2, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA5044	10:40pm	11:30pm	1, 5

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

UA5039	2:20pm	2:55pm	6, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

UA5039	3:25pm	4:00pm	6, 7

SAIPAN-PALAU (ROR)

DL287	6:05am	1:10am+1	2, 6 via NRT

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL287	6:05am	8:40am	1, 2, 4, 5, 6
DL297	4:20pm	7:05pm	Daily

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ606	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ606	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ6063	3:20am	7:10am	3, 4, 6, 7
OZ604	3:20pm	7:10pm	Daily
7C 3401	4:30pm	8:20pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:10am	6:20am	4, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648	6:00am	8:35am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

MU764	1:30am	5:30am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:30am	7:30am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ606/701	2:10am	11:15am	1 via ICN
OZ606/701	2:40am	11:15am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA5069/PR111	2:45am	4:50pm	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
UA5070/191	4:15am	7:20am	2, 7 via GUM
UA5070/191	4:15am	9:00am	3, 6 via GUM
UA5070/183	4:15am	8:45pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA5070/183	4:15am	9:10pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
DL287/275	6:05am	9:35pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 6 via NRT
UA5071/PR111	6:40am	4:50pm	3 via GUM
UA5071/PR111	7:15am	4:50pm	1, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
UA5068/183	8:00am	9:50pm	3 via GUM
UA5068/183	8:40am	9:30pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA5068/183	8:40am	9:50pm	1, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA5039/183	2:20pm	9:50pm	6, 7 via Rota-GUM
UA5038/183	3:10pm	9:30pm	2 via GUM
UA5078/183	3:10pm	9:30pm	5 via GUM
UA5078/183	3:10pm	9:50pm	1 via GUM
UA5038/183	3:10pm	9:50pm	4 via GUM
OZ604/703	3:20pm	11:00pm	Daily via ICN

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

OZ606/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ606/723	2:10am	12:50pm	1 via ICN
OZ606/721	2:40am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ606/723	2:40am	12:50pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA5070/179	4:15am	10:35pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA5068/179	8:00am	10:35pm	3 via GUM
UA5068/179	8:40am	10:35pm	1, 5, 6 via GUM
UA5039/179	2:20pm	10:35pm	6 via Rota-GUM
UA5078/179	3:10pm	10:35pm	1, 5 via GUM
OZ604/749	3:20pm	10:30pm	Daily via ICN

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA5069	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
UA5071	6:40am	7:30am	3
UA5071	7:15am	8:05am	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7
UA5039	1:00pm	1:50pm	6, 7
UA5038	1:10pm	2:40pm	2, 4 via Rota
UA5077	1:50pm	2:40pm	1, 5
UA5041	5:35pm	6:25pm	1, 5
UA5077	7:15pm	8:05pm	2, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA5043	9:20pm	10:10pm	1, 5

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)

UA5038	1:00pm	1:35pm	2, 4

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

UA5038	2:05pm	2:40pm	2, 4

PALAU (ROR)-SAIPAN

DL298	4:35am	3:00pm	3, 7 via NRT

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL298	10:25am	3:00pm	Daily
DL288	8:55pm	1:25am+1	1, 3, 4, 5, 7

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

OZ603	9:00am	2:20pm	Daily
7C 3402	10:10am	3:30pm	Daily
OZ605	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ605	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
OZ6053	8:50pm	2:10am+1	2, 3, 5, 6

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:00pm	1:50am+1	3, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

3U8647	10:30pm	4:30am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

MU763	4:30pm	12:30am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

3U8645	7:55pm	3:10am+1	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

OZ704/603	12:10am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
PR110/UA5041	7:35am	6:25pm	1,5 via GUM
PR110/UA5077	7:35am	8:05pm	3, 6, 7 via GUM
PR110/UA5043	7:35am	10:10pm	1, 5 via GUM
DL172/288	9:40am	1:25am+1	1, 3, 4, 5, 7 via NRT
UA190/5077	9:55am	8:05pm	2, 7 via GUM
UA190/5077	10:00am	8:05pm	3, 6 via GUM
OZ702/605	12:30pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/605	12:30pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
UA184/5071	10:55pm	7:30am+1	3 via GUM
UA184/5071	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/5039	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	6, 7 via GUM
UA184/5038	10:55pm	2:40pm+1	4 via GUM-Rota
UA184/5077	10:55pm	2:40pm+1	1 via GUM
UA184/5041	10:55pm	6:25pm+1	1 via GUM
UA184/5077	10:55pm	8:05pm+1	3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/5043	10:55pm	10:10pm+1	1 via GUM
UA184/5071	10:59pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via GUM
UA184/5038	10:59pm	2:40pm+1	2 via GUM-Rota
UA184/5077	10:59pm	2:40pm+1	5 via GUM
UA184/5041	10:59pm	6:25pm+1	5 via GUM
UA184/5077	10:59pm	8:05pm+1	2 via GUM
UA184/5043	10:59pm	10:10pm+1	5 via GUM

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ746/603	12:30am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
OZ750/603	1:10am	2:20pm	Daiily via ICN
OZ722/605	1:15pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ724/605	2:20pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/605	1:15pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ724/605	2:20pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
UA180/5071	10:55pm	7:30am+1	3 via GUM
UA180/5071	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 5, 6 via GUM
UA180/5039	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	6 via GUM
UA180/5077	10:55pm	2:40pm+1	1, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA180/5041	10:55pm	6:25pm+1	1, 5 via GUM
UA180/5077	10:55pm	8:05pm+1	3, 6 via GUM
UA180/5043	10:55pm	10:10pm+1	1, 5 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; MU: China Eastern; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; 7C: Jeju AirETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

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TINIAN TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:00AM	7:15AM	Mon, Tue,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
12:30NN	12:45NN	Daily
1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily
9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
12:00NN	12:15NN	Daily
1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO ROTA

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:45AM	8:15AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:00PM	4:30PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

ROTA TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:45PM	5:15PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

Business

White House: Health law sign-ups top 11M

WASHINGTON (AP)—More than 11 million people signed up for subsidized private health insurance under President Barack Obama's law this year, the White House announced Tuesday evening.

But that preliminary estimate—11.4 million people—comes with a couple of asterisks:

■ The final number could grow because the administration is offering a grace period for people who started applications—but couldn't finish them—before last Sunday's official deadline. They have until February 22, this coming Sunday.

Also, Democratic lawmakers are pressing Obama to grant a second chance to sign up for uninsured people facing tax penalties.

■ The final number could shrink if consumers who've enrolled for 2015 coverage don't follow through by paying their share of premiums.

"The Affordable Care Act is working," Obama said in a White House video. "It's working a little better than we anticipated. Certainly, I think, working a lot better than many of the critics talked about early on."

AP
In this photo made Thursday, Feb. 12, 2015, a laptop shows the HealthCar.Com web site during an Affordable Care Act enrollment event at the Fort Worth Public Library in Fort Worth, Texas.

Last year, 8 million people had initially signed up. But by fall, just 6.7 million were still in the program. Some of those who left found other coverage, through a job for example.

According to independent studies, at least 10 million uninsured people gained coverage last year as the health care law's big insurance expansion got under way. One part of the law offers subsidized private health insurance tailored to workers and families who don't have coverage on the job. Another part expands Medicaid to serve low-income adults in states that accept it.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates that this year there will be 19 million fewer uninsured Americans than if the law had never passed.

Sign-up season for private plans went relatively smoothly this year, a turnaround from the technology meltdown that embarrassed the White House last year. Coverage is offered through online health insurance markets, also called exchanges. The federal HealthCare.gov website serves 37 states, while the rest run their own markets.

Although HealthCare.gov was slowed by a glitch on Saturday, an independent assessment for The Associated Press found that the website worked smoothly overall during its big weekend.

Catchpoint Systems, which monitors website performance, found that HealthCare.gov's sign-up page was available more than 99 percent of the time from last Friday through Sunday, and typically loaded in about 4 seconds.

Catchpoint CEO Mehdi Daoudi called that "very good."

Separately, privacy concerns have been raised about HealthCare.gov this year, after The Associated Press reported that the site was quietly sending some personal consumer information to companies that specialize in analyzing Internet data for performance and marketing. The administration quickly scaled back the practice, but there's an ongoing congressional inquiry into the matter.

This biggest question hanging over HealthCare.gov this year has nothing to do with technology.

Early next month, the Supreme Court will hear arguments on another challenge to Obama's law. The plaintiffs in the case say the literal text of the legislation only allows the federal government to offer subsidies in states that set up their own insurance markets. Most states have not done so.

If the court sides with the plaintiffs, millions of people would lose financial assistance, and most of those would drop their coverage.

Did NSA plant spyware in computers around world?

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Did the National Security Agency plant spyware deep in the hard drives of thousands of computers used by foreign governments, banks and other surveillance targets around the world?

A new report from Russian cybersecurity firm Kaspersky Lab said its researchers identified a new family of malicious programs or worms that infected computers in multiple countries, primarily overseas. Targets appeared to be specifically selected and included military, Islamic activists, energy companies and other businesses, as well as government personnel.

Without naming the United States as the source of the malware, the report said one of the programs has elements in common with the so-called Stuxnet worm, which the New York Times and Washington Post have said was developed by the U.S. and Israeli governments to disrupt Iranian nuclear facilities. Based on their similarities, the creators of both programs "are either the same or working closely together," Kaspersky's report said.

The malware was not designed for financial gain but to collect information through "pure cyberespionage," added Kaspersky researcher Vitaly Kamluk. In its report, the firm said the malware was extremely sophisticated and "expensive to develop."

NSA spokeswoman Vanee Vines declined comment Tuesday, but cited a 2014 presidential directive that instructed U.S. intelligence agencies to respect Americans' privacy while continuing to conduct overseas operations necessary to guard against terrorism or other threats.

After lobbying push, drugmaker resubmits women's sex pill

WASHINGTON (AP)—The makers of a twice-rejected pill designed to boost sexual desire in women are hoping a yearlong lobbying push by politicians, women's groups and consumer advocates will move their much-debated drug onto the market.

The ongoing saga of Sprout Pharmaceutical's female libido drug illustrates the complicated politics and unresolved science surrounding women's sexuality.

For decades, drugmakers have tried unsuccessfully to develop a female equivalent to Viagra, the blockbuster drug that treats men's erectile dysfunction drug by increasing blood flow. But disorders of women's sexual desire have proven resistant to drugs that act on blood flow, hormones and other simple biological functions.

Supporters of Sprout's drug say women's sexual disorders have been overlooked for too long by regulators at the Food and Drug Administration. But critics argue that women's sexuality is too complex to be addressed by a single pill.

Sprout's drug flibanserin is the first attempt to increase libido by acting on brain chemicals linked to appetite and mood. But the Food and Drug Administration has already twice rejected the drug because of lackluster effectiveness and side effects including fatigue, dizziness and nausea.

In an effort to break the regulatory logjam, groups sponsored by Sprout and other drugmakers have begun publicizing the lack of a "female Viagra" as a women's rights issue.

Why refinery strike has had little bite at gas pump

NEW YORK (AP)—Gasoline prices can spike for all kinds of reasons that make skeptical drivers roll their eyes: "tension" in the Middle East, a refinery suddenly shuts down for maintenance, or the annual springtime switch to summer blends of gasoline.

A refinery strike, however, would seem understandable. Yet three weeks into a walkout at 11 refineries around the country, the impact on the prices of gasoline, diesel and other fuels is barely discernable.

Gasoline prices have gone up this month, but mostly due to a sharp increase in the price of oil and because gas prices almost always rise at this time of year, according to Tom Kloza, chief oil analyst at the Oil Price Information Service.

If autoworkers strike, cars stop coming off the line. If teachers strike, kids don't go to school. But refineries are different. They are like giant pressure cookers, and once they are up and running they don't need all that much elbow grease to keep oil flowing in and fuels coming out.

"We can continue on running with the staffing levels that we have ... for a very long period of time," Tesoro CEO Geoff Goff told investors last week. Tesoro owns three of the refineries undergoing strikes.

The United Steelworkers union, which represents workers at 230 refineries, oil terminals, pipelines and petrochemical facilities in the U.S., called a strike February 1 after failing to come to agreement over a new contract. The union accuses the refinery operators of creating unsafe conditions by tiring out union workers with extensive overtime requirements and using more and more contract workers, who they say aren't as well-trained as USW members.

Procurement And Supply
CNMI Government

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

RFP NO.: RFP15-COTA/FTA-034
SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 04, 2015 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"PREPARATION, DESIGN AND LAYOUT OF THE 2014 ANNUAL REPORT FOR COTA, A PROJECT UNDER THE COMMONWEALTH OFFICE OF TRANSIT AUTHORITY"

The Scope of Work for this project will be available on or after **February 05, 2015** at the COTA Office, 2nd Floor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building located in Capitol Hill, Saipan during regular working hours.

Questions regarding this RFP is due no later than the **close of business, February 23, 2015** and should be addressed to **Ms. Alfreda P. Camacho** by e-mail to **alfreda.camacho@gov.mp**. All responses to questions shall be shared with all prospective proposers.

The Commonwealth reserves the right to reject any and all bids and proposals; in whole or in part, and to waive any imperfection in a bid in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. All bids shall become the property of the CNMI Government.

/s/ VINCE MERFALEN
Acting Special Assistant For Public Transportation

/s/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
Director, P&S

Veterans of Foreign Wars
Saipan Post 3457

VFW AMERICAN FLAG DISPOSAL PROGRAM

VFW Saipan Post 3457, located on Palm Street in Garapan, announces a new program to assist the community by properly disposing of old, unserviceable American flags. It will be done in accordance with federal regulations on flag etiquette. This will be a no-cost service and flags may be dropped off at the VFW between 4:00PM and 10:00PM daily.

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Nation

White House puts immigration plans on hold after ruling

AP
Mercedes Herrera and others chant during an event on DACA and DAPA Immigration Relief at the Houston International Trade Center, Tuesday, Feb. 17, 2015, in Houston.

Plaintiff states
A total of 26 states are suing the Obama administration over the recent executive order on immigration.
States suing the federal government over immigration action
Source: U.S. District Court documents
Graphic: Tribune News Service

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Obama administration put its new deportation-relief program on hold Tuesday on the eve of its launch, complying reluctantly with a federal judge's order that roiled immigrant communities nationwide and seemed to harden an already-tense stalemate on Capitol Hill.

President Barack Obama promised an appeal and predicted he'd prevail. But for tens of thousands of immigrants in line to begin applying Wednesday for work permits and deportation stays under his directives, their plans were canceled, at least temporarily.

Talking to reporters in the Oval Office, Obama said he disagreed with the ruling by U.S. District Judge Andrew Hanen of Texas that the administration had exceeded its authority. But he said that, for now, he must abide by it.

"We're not going to disregard this federal court ruling," Obama said, but he added that administration officials would continue to prepare to roll out the program. "I think the law is on our side and history is on our side," he said.

On Capitol Hill, the Homeland Security Department stood 10 days away from losing funding, but Hanen's ruling made a compromise on that dispute look more distant than ever. Republicans are blocking funding for the agency unless Democrats agree to cancel Obama's immigration orders, and they seized on the ruling as validation for their position.

"Congress must reassert its waning power. We must re-establish the constitutional principle that the people's representatives control the purse," said Sen. Jeff Sessions of Alabama, a leading immigration hardliner.

Yet Senate Democrats, who have been blocking a House-passed bill that would fund the department but also undo Obama's actions, said the ruling from Hanen did nothing to budge them.

"Democrats remain united in our belief that funding for the Department of Homeland Security should not be used as a ransom by Republicans, period," said Chuck Schumer of New York.

The agency's $40 billion budget runs out Feb. 27, and with Congress now on recess lawmakers will have only a few days to reach an agreement once they return to Washington next week. One possibility is a short-term extension of current funding levels, but House Speaker John Boehner said over the weekend that the House had done its job and he would "certainly" let a shutdown occur if the Senate didn't act.

If the political impasse seemed severe, so were the implications for millions of immigrants in the country illegally who have cheered Obama's executive directives in the face of congressional inaction.

"We feel powerless but not defeated, sure that it will all work out," 46-year-old Claudia Ramon, a native of Colombia, said at a rally in Houston, one of dozens nationwide where immigrants and their advocates vowed to continue with preparations under Obama's programs.

Obama's directives would make more than 4 million immigrants in the United States illegally eligible for three-year deportation stays and work permits. Mostly those are people who have been in the country for more than five years and have children who are U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents. Applications for the first phase were to begin Wednesday, when as many as 300,000 immigrants brought illegally to the country as children could begin applying for an expansion of Obama's 2012 program aimed at the younger immigrants known as Dreamers.

ACROSS THE NATION

Police: Vegas mom, son searched for vehicle before shooting

LAS VEGAS (AP)—A Las Vegas mother of four killed in a road rage shooting last week got in her car with her adult son and his gun and drove around their neighborhood looking for the assailant who ended up shooting her in a residential cul-de-sac, police said Tuesday. In a change from earlier accounts, police Lt. Ray Steiber said 44-year-old Tammy Meyers had her teenage daughter run in the house to fetch her armed son, who then went with her as she drove to find the driver who had earlier stopped his car in front of hers, got out and approached her with angry words. "Mrs. Meyers is scared, but she's upset," Steiber said, adding that the intent appeared to be "so they can find who frightened them on the roadway."

Mother of defendant in 'American Sniper' trial testifies

STEPHENVILLE, Texas (AP)—The mother of the former Marine accused of killing "American Sniper" author Chris Kyle and another man testified that she didn't know after asking Kyle to help her troubled son that they'd be going to a shooting range. Jodi Routh, defendant Eddie Ray Routh's mother, said under cross-examination by prosecutors Tuesday she didn't know Kyle's plan. Asked if she regretted not telling Kyle of threats Routh had made to kill himself and his family, she said she just wanted help for him. Routh is charged in the 2013 deaths of the former Navy SEAL and his friend, Chad Littlefield, at the range. The trial has drawn intense interest, partly because of an Oscar-nominated film based on Kyle's memoir. Routh, whose attorneys are mounting an insanity defense, has pleaded not guilty.

SIDEBAR

Immigrants disappointed but not deterred by judge's ruling

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Immigrants expressed disappointment Tuesday after a federal judge put a hold on President Barack Obama's plan to protect more than 4 million people living illegally in the U.S. from deportation. But many said they haven't lost hope.

A look at immigrant views of Obama's programs:

Growing up in Guatemala, Keyla Betancurth used to watch her single mother cry at night because she could not afford to buy food for her children. Betancourt left school at 12 to work at a bakery to help. Then, at 17, she took a bigger step, paying a smuggler to get her to the U.S.

"I wanted a better future for myself and for my mom," said the 28-year-old, who wants to apply for Obama's program for the parents of Americans. "Now, I'm a mother, and I want the best for my kids. I don't want my kids to suffer like I did."

Betancurth, who has three young children, has been a farmworker in California and Iowa and, since moving to Denver three years ago, a maid. Her husband, who is from Honduras, paints houses.

For both, steady, well-paid work is difficult to find because they lack Social Security numbers. She wants to return to school to study hairdressing and, one day, open her own salon.

"My big dream is to study," she said.

Claudia Ramon, 46, said she and her daughters did not give each other presents this past Christmas because they were saving their money to pay the application fees for Obama's immigration program.

With the delay, the family now plans on exchanging small gifts on Wednesday.

"We feel powerless but not defeated, sure that it will all work out," said Ramon, who cleans homes for a living in Houston but was a psychologist in her native Colombia.

She said she lives in fear, afraid a simple traffic ticket will take her away from her family.

She recalled an accident five years ago when a police officer asked her for her driver's license. She told the officer that she didn't have it and that she had been on her way to take her daughter Isabella, who has Down syndrome, to physical therapy. The officer let her go with a warning.

Chicago-area imam charged with sex abuse at Islamic school

CHICAGO (AP)—The longtime head of a suburban Chicago Islamic school has been charged with sexually assaulting a woman who worked there, and a civil suit filed Tuesday accuses him of abusing that employee and three teenage students. The legal actions shed light on an issue that even many Muslims say is too often pushed into the shadows within their communities.

Mohammad Abdullah Saleem, 75—who founded the Institute of Islamic Education and is regarded as a leading Islamic scholar, or imam, in the United States—is charged with felony criminal sexual abuse. Prosecutors said he abused the 23-year-old woman, an administrative assistant at the Elgin school, in a series of escalating incidents over months.

The civil suit accuses Saleem of abusing that employee, as well as three female students at the school as far back as the 1980s. The lawyer in that case, Steven Denny, said Saleem took advantage of both the trust accorded to him as a religious leader and of the tendency of Muslims to remain silent on matters of sex and sexual abuse.

"This place was ripe for abuse," Denny told a news conference.

It took special courage, he added, for his clients to come forward within a culture that discourages even casual contact—never mind explicit sexual contact.

The suit says a fifth person was abused when he was 11 by a male staffer at the school, not Saleem. It accuses the school of failing to protect children, many of whom lived on campus. It asks for more than $1.5 million in compensation, saying the victims are psychologically scarred.

Defense attorney Thomas Glasgow said he talked to his client about the Elgin charges and that Saleem "categorically denies the allegations." He hadn't had a chance to speak to him about the lawsuit. No one answered the phone Tuesday at the school, which has students from grades six through 12 and is 25 miles northwest of Chicago.

Saleem, of Gilberts, was arrested Sunday, Elgin police said. Authorities started investigating after the woman contacted them in December.

Asia

BOJ says economy on mend, keeps ultra-loose monetary policy

AP
People walk past an electronic stock board of a securities firm in Tokyo, Tuesday, Feb. 3, 2015.

TOKYO (AP)—Japan's central bank pointed to signs of improvement in the world's third-biggest economy after ending a policy meeting Wednesday with no change to its ultra-loose monetary stance.

The Bank of Japan noted that lower energy costs due to the plunge in crude prices will slow progress toward its inflation target of 2 percent.

But it cited a recovery in exports, improved industrial production and increased corporate investment as evidence that Japan's economy is in a "moderate recovery trend." Japan exited a recession in the last quarter of 2014.

The bank said a slump in housing investment is beginning to bottom out.

The BOJ is injecting tens of trillions of yen (hundreds of billions of dollars) into the economy each year to encourage business investment and push prices higher, in turn weakening Japan's currency.

The weaker currency has fattened profits of exporters, helping push share prices to seven-year highs.

In its statement, the central bank did not mention the issue of falling or stagnant wages. They are a key concern frequently raised both by BOJ Gov. Haruhiko Kuroda and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who has made strong fiscal and monetary stimulus his main strategy for countering years of deflationary stagnation.

The central bank did note, regarding private consumption, that the "recovery in some areas has been sluggish."

Kuroda and Abe, and many economists, say that long-term growth will hinge on improved purchasing power for Japanese consumers, whose spending is the main driver of growth. They have been lobbying the business community to raise wages at a faster pace to help support the recovery.

Although the economy grew at a 2.2 percent annualized pace in the last quarter, it was flat for the entire year, which was its worst performance in three years.

"The BOJ does not seem to be fully convinced over the strength of the economic recovery, and we still think that policymakers will announce more stimulus in late April," Capital Economics said in a commentary Wednesday, describing the central bank's assessment as "too optimistic."

Myanmar puts army in charge in troubled Kokang region

YANGON, Myanmar (AP)—Myanmar granted its military unprecedented powers to deal with fighting between ethnic minority rebels and government troops in the Kokang region, after week-long clashes left dozens of soldiers dead and sent tens of thousands of refugees fleeing to neighboring China.

Two announcements, signed by Myanmar President Thein Sein, were read out on national television late Tuesday declaring a 90-day state of emergency and that a military administration had been imposed in the northern special region.

A state-run newspaper, the Myanmar Ahlin daily, reported an attack on a Myanmar Red Cross convoy. It says the seven-car convoy carrying 100 civilians was under a Red Cross flag when it was attacked about 50 kilometers (30 miles) south of the regional capital of Laukkai. A Red Cross worker and a truck driver were hurt. The Ministry of Information blamed the attack on Kokang rebels.

Myanmar, a predominantly Buddhist nation of 50 million people, only recently emerged from a half-century of military rule.

Thein Sein's elected government, which came to power in 2011, has previously declared states of emergency because of sectarian conflict in the western state of Rakhine and for localized instances of fighting between Buddhists and Muslims.

But it was the first time his government has imposed a military administration, which gives the army executive and judicial powers in the designated region. The clause permitting this is in the 2008 constitution, which was drawn up under a military government, and is one of several that enables the military to continue to dominate the government.

Independent political analyst Yan Myo Thein said the assumption of such powers by the military is likely to draw scrutiny from other ethnic groups which, like the Kokang, are seeking greater autonomy in their areas. And it comes as the government tries to sign a nationwide peace accord with those groups and ahead of the elections that are supposed to be held later this year.

According to the government, as of Monday, more than 50 troops had been killed and 73 wounded since last week, while 26 were killed on the Kokang side.

State-run media said Tuesday that during the visit to a hospital treating wounded soldiers, Thein Sein vowed that his government "will not lose an inch of Myanmar territory."

The fighting has forced people to flee over the border. Citing government officials, the Chinese state-owned news site Yunnan.cn said Monday that there had been 30,000 border crossings by Myanmar nationals over the past week into Yunnan province.

Lin Sen, a volunteer helping refugees in Yunnan, said by phone Tuesday that as many as 50,000 refugees may have escaped Kokang.

Kokang is dominated by ethnic Han Chinese, and the region has been embroiled in fighting since conflicts between the Kokang rebels and government troops intensified on Feb. 9.

"The announcement of military administration has no impact on us. This will only make the lives of Kokang people living in Laukkai difficult," Htun Myat Lin, general secretary of the Kokang rebel group, said by phone Tuesday. He said government troops had occupied Laukkai.

He says his group is seeking autonomy for Kokang and its ethnic Han Chinese people.

"We want to have a high degree of autonomy where we can manage our own affairs, but we do not wish to split the country of Myanmar," Htun said, adding that ethnic Han Chinese are treated as second-class citizens in Myanmar.

Though preliminary peace pacts have been reached with most of the ethnic groups, clashes occasionally occur with Kachin, Shan and others. In addition to control over jade, timber and other natural resources in areas under their control, they want assurances that they will have some say over future troop movements.

US pays $1.97M to PH for damaged reef

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The Philippine government said Wednesday it had received 87 million pesos ($1.97 million) from the United States to pay for damage caused by a U.S. Navy minesweeper to a protected reef two years ago.

Manila received the compensation last month for the damage that resulted from the grounding of the minesweeper USS Guardian at Tubbataha Reef, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Department of Foreign Affairs said in a statement.

The statement said the money will help rehabilitate and protect the reef and enhance monitoring of the area to prevent a repeat of the incident.

It said that in addition, the U.S. government will assist the Philippine coast guard in upgrading its station at the reef.

The park management, the World Wide Fund for Nature, and marine experts said in a joint assessment that about 2,345 square meters (25,240 square feet) of corals were damaged.

The Guardian ran aground at the Tubbataha National Marine Park in January 2013 and was dismantled piece by piece over two months to prevent further damage to the reef. The U.S. Navy and the American ambassador apologized for accident.

The U.S. Pacific Fleet relieved the ship's commanding officer, executive officer and navigator, assistant navigator and officer on deck after initial findings indicated they had failed to adhere to standard navigation procedures at the time of the grounding.

ASIAN BRIEFS

China urges fewer fireworks during New Year celebrations

BEIJING (AP)—Setting off fireworks to celebrate Chinese New Year may be a centuries-old tradition, but the country's authorities are urging people to light fewer of them this week as cities fight a losing battle against relentless, toxic air pollution. Dozens of cites in China have outright banned lighting fireworks on Wednesday and Thursday, while others have reduced the number of fireworks vendors allowed to operate. In Beijing, people received text messages from their phone companies advising against setting off fireworks while local government-run media repeated the warnings in newspapers and on websites. Still, the state-run China Daily warned Wednesday that Beijing's clear skies would likely become heavily polluted by the night due to fireworks, reaching the highest level possible on a scale measuring air pollution. It said the polluted air would probably last through Friday due to windless conditions. Despite the warnings, one Beijing fireworks vendor surnamed Yu said Wednesday that he was still swamped with customers. He said he was allowed to sell his goods for only 10 days this year, compared to 20 the year before.

Modi's controversial suit to be auctioned for charity

NEW DELHI (AP)—Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's controversial pinstripe suit embroidered with his name was to be auctioned Wednesday in his home state of Gujarat, officials said. The money collected from auctioning the suit and hundreds of other gifts received by the prime minister would be used to clean up the heavily polluted Ganges River. Modi wore the dark pinstriped suit during the visit of U.S. President Barack Obama to India last month. Photographs of the suit showing Modi's name monogrammed in dull gold stripes went viral on social media. Opposition leaders attacked Modi for his extravagance in wearing a suit that was estimated to cost more than 1 million rupees ($16,000). Gujarat official Milind Toravane said the suit and other items received by Modi since he became prime minister nearly nine months ago were to be auctioned over the next three days starting Wednesday. The gifts include decorative pieces in silver and brass among other objects.

World

France: Tracking 400 believed to be in terror sleeper cells

PARIS (AP)—France is tracking hundreds of people believed to belong to possible sleeper cells for terror organizations like al-Qaida or the Islamic State group, the country's top security official said.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve laid out what has become an increasingly urgent question for European intelligence services: How to trace the moment when someone transforms from a disgruntled criminal or a disaffected citizen into a terrorist, and how to block those first steps toward radicalization.

"Four hundred targets have been identified by our intelligence services that are more or less sleeper cells, affiliated or in relation with al-Qaida-type organizations, that can strike like the Kouachi brothers," Cazeneuve said in an interview late Monday.

Said and Cherif Kouachi were French-born brothers who killed 12 people in Paris on Jan. 7 when they stormed the satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo. They were shot dead by police in a confrontation two days later.

Cazeneuve said he wants new measures to give intelligence services more leeway to monitor suspects' electronic communications. He is heading to the United States on Wednesday to try and persuade Internet giants to step up and help stem extremists' ability to use propaganda videos to recruit and indoctrinate new followers.

AP

In this photo taken on Monday Feb. 16, 2015, French interior minister Bernard Cazeneuve gestures during an interview with the Associated Press, at his office in Paris.

Facebook, Twitter, Apple and Google—all major vectors for increasingly sophisticated jihadi clips targeting potential followers in the West—will be among his stops in Silicon Valley.

"Ninety percent of those who commit terrorist acts fall into it after regularly consulting websites or blogs that call for or provoke terrorism," Cazeneuve said.

With the news that the suspected gunman in the deadly Copenhagen attacks this weekend may have been radicalized during a series of stints in jail—like at least two of the gunmen in the Paris attacks last month—Cazeneuve's trip to the U.S. to strengthen intelligence sharing between governments and win over the tech firms takes on added importance.

The pace of foreign fighters joining the Islamic State and other extremist groups has not slowed and at least 3,400 come from Western nations among 20,000 from around the world, U.S. intelligence officials say.

"We won't be able to deal with this subject by always brushing the dust under the rug," Cazeneuve said. "At some point the dust gets thicker than the rug."

The minister said the Kouachi brothers were under French surveillance from 2011 until 2014 after the U.S. government tipped off the French about Said Kouachi's trip to Yemen, but the monitoring produced nothing that indicated the brothers were on the verge of a deadly attack.

Cherif Kouachi had served time for being part of a jihadi recruiting network and was apparently behind bars when he met the third Paris gunman, Amedy Coulibaly, a small-time criminal who became radicalized in prison. Coulibaly pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group in a posthumously released video that is still circulating among jihadis.

"When you have terrorists who keep a low profile for years and then suddenly decide to act—either to obey an order from large terrorist organization such as al-Qaida or of their own volition—then you need to be able to monitor them on a long term," the minister said.

Further worrying European officials are the networks of radicals in jail who use their prison terms to influence others behind bars.

"You have a few of them who maintain that religious fanaticism, which very likely didn't start that way, but they use it to have an excuse to be angry and do all these ugly things," Kim Oesterbye, head of the Danish Prison Officers Union, told The Associated Press. "If we see people who change toward having more radical behavior, then we can report it."

In the Danish shootings case, prison officials last year alerted PET, the domestic intelligence agency, to the suspected Danish gunman but the report gave no indication he was planning an attack. Two sources close to the case identified the gunman to the AP as Omar Abdel Hamid El-Hussein but Danish authorities have not yet released his name.

Ukraine soldiers taken prisoner in fighting for railway hub

LUHANSKE, Ukraine (AP)—Under a near-constant barrage of artillery fire, Ukrainian forces and separatist rebels fought fierce street battles Tuesday for control of the strategic railway hub of Debaltseve, a battle impeding implementation of a peace plan.

Ukraine denied rebel claims to have taken control of the town but acknowledged the separatists had seized parts of it. The battle came despite a weekend cease-fire that obliged both sides to start moving back their big guns on Tuesday.

A key railroad junction between the separatist east's two main cities of Donetsk and Luhansk, Debaltseve has been the focus of fighting over the past two weeks and capturing it would be a prize for the Russia-backed rebels.

The defense ministry said street battles continued there Tuesday and government soldiers had been ambushed and taken prisoner, but gave no details on how many were seized. Rebel spokesman Eduard Basurin said hundreds of Ukrainian soldiers had surrendered in Debaltseve.

Associated Press journalists were turned back by Ukrainian forces at Luhanske, a village about 10 miles (15 kilometers) north of Debaltseve and were unable to assess the status of the fight.

The leader of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic, one of two separatist entities, was wounded in the leg and hospitalized in the neighboring Luhansk region, Russia's RIA-Novosti news agency quoted a Luhansk rebel official as saying. Zakharchenko's life was not in danger, the report said.

The Ukrainian presidential office called on the European Union and NATO to condemn the Russia-backed rebels for violating the cease-fire brokered by the leaders of Ukraine, Russia, Germany and France last week.

Vice President Joe Biden condemned violations of the cease-fire in eastern Ukraine which the White House is blaming on pro-Russian separatists and Russian forces.

Biden spoke by telephone with Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko. The White House said the violation occurred in and around Debaltseve and it was confirmed by special monitors from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Biden also condemned Russia and the separatists for blocking the monitors' access and said that has allowed the separatists to continue attacks unabated. He said if Russia keeps violating the agreements reached with Ukraine, costs for Russia will increase.

The war in eastern Ukraine has already killed more than 5,600 people and displaced more than a million, the United Nations said Monday. It has also left the country's industrial heartland in ruins.

Egypt's el-Sissi wants a UN-backed coalition on Libya

CAIRO (AP)—Egypt's president said in a radio interview aired on Tuesday that creating a U.N.-backed coalition was the best course of action to rid Libya of Islamic extremists.

Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi, speaking to France's Europe 1 Radio, said Egyptian airstrikes against Islamic State group positions in Libya on Monday were in self-defense.

The airstrikes were in retaliation for the mass beheading on a beach of a group of Egyptian Coptic Christians. A video of the killings was release late Sunday by a faction calling itself the Tripoli Province of the Islamic State group.

"We will not allow them to cut off the heads of our children," he said. Asked whether he wanted to see a U.N.-backed coalition for Libya, he said: "I think there is no choice." He added that any intervention to restore security in Libya should be done with the consent of the country's people and government.

"We have abandoned the Libyan people as prisoners of the militias ... The militias have to give up their arms and must work in a civil context. We have to disarm and prevent arms from falling into the hands of extremists," el-Sissi, a general-turned-politician, told the French station in his first public comments after his country's U.S.-made F-16s staged at least two rounds of airstrikes in Libya on Monday.

"What happened is a crime, a monstrous terrorist crime that our children have their throats cuts in Libya and not to react. It's a kind of self-defense accepted by the international community. We will not allow them to cut off the heads of our children," he said.

The Egyptian attacks drew harsh criticism from Omar al-Hassi, the militia-supported prime minister in the capital, Tripoli. Libya's elected and internationally recognized parliament and government were forced to convene outside Tripoli when the capital was overrun by Islamic and tribal militias last year. An older parliament, supported by the militias, declared itself legitimate and formed a rival government with al-Hassi at the head.

"This treacherous aggression and the terrorism carried out by the Egyptian air force is a violation of Libyan sovereignty and a scandalous violation of the U.N. charter and international law," said al-Hassi, who accused the Egyptians of attacking Libya "without any solid proof" that they were actually striking the militants responsible for killing the Egyptian Christians.

Uneasy alliance of Kurds and Shiites formed in northern Iraq

KIRKUK, Iraq (AP)—Shiite militiamen shuttle back and forth to the nearby front lines from a sprawling military base near the northern oil-rich city of Kirkuk. They hoist billboards of their commander, bellow Shiite prayers from mosque loudspeakers and chant the name of their spiritual leader.

All of this unsettles Kurdish leaders and residents who have sought for years to carve out a semiautonomous homeland in northern Iraq and since last summer have been battling the Sunni extremists from the Islamic State to keep hold of Kirkuk.

While the recently arrived Shiite fighters have been welcomed by the Kurds to take on a common enemy, the alliance is an uneasy one.

When the IS militants swept across northern and western Iraq last year, seizing towns and cities, tens of thousands of Shiite men answered a call to arms by the country's top Shiite cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, to defend the nation.

Now those Arab fighters have arrived in Kirkuk, long one of Iraq's most disputed territories. They have made a string of bases their home only 10 kilometers (six miles) from the city, where the Kurds have been exclusively in charge since repelling the IS militants.

Friction between the Kurds and Arabs feeds the combustible inter-ethnic competition over who will ultimately control of the city.

The Shiite fighters, officially known as the Popular Mobilization Forces, were instrumental last summer in helping the faltering Iraqi military stall the IS push outside Baghdad.

They have also teamed up with Kurdish peshmerga forces in a number of battles, breaking the siege of the northern Shiite-majority town of Amirli in August, and recently driving IS militants from a string of towns in Diyala province, northeast of the Iraqi capital.

But the arrival of the Shiite fighters in Kirkuk, 290 kilometers (180 miles) north of Baghdad, has provoked deep-rooted sensitivities.

Kirkuk, located along the fluid line that separates Kurdish northern Iraq from the rest of the country, is home to Arabs, Kurds and Turkmen, and all have competing claims to the area.

Kurdish forces claimed control of the city just days after the Islamic State group seized northern Iraqi cities including Mosul and Tikrit.

The Kurds have long wanted to incorporate the city into their semiautonomous region, but Arabs and Turkmen oppose this.

Holding onto Kirkuk has not been easy. Last month, IS fighters—aided by what the Kurds say was a Sunni sleeper cell in the city—stormed an abandoned Kirkuk hotel, and then staged a surprise attack on a peshmerga outpost, killing a top commander and several of his troops.

Enviroment

Study: China is lead contributor to plastic trash in oceans

By GEOFFREY MOHAN
LOS ANGELES TIMES

LOS ANGELES TIMES/MCT

Scenic beaches along little-developed stretches of Mexico's Caribbean coast are plagued by washed-up plastic trash carried there by currents, often from great distances.

The first worldwide estimate of where the ocean's massive amount of plastic garbage comes from points at China and developing economies in Asia.

The study, published online Thursday in the journal Science, estimates that China's heavily coastal population contributes 1.3 million to 3.5 million metric tons of plastic to the world's oceans each year, largely due to mismanaged waste.

Eight of the top 10 contributors were in Asia, including Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Malaysia and Bangladesh, according to the study, which estimated that 4.8 million to 12.7 million metric tons of plastic wound up in the world's oceans in 2010.

"Our low-end estimate is equivalent to the amount of tuna fished from the ocean in a single year," oceanographer Kara Lavender Law of the Sea Education Association in Woods Hole, Mass., said during a news conference Thursday. "We are taking out tuna and putting in plastic."

Even the middle range, or 8 million metric tons (8.8 U.S. tons), "is the same as five (trash) bags filled with plastic for every foot of coastline in the world," added co-author Jenna Jambeck, a University of Georgia environmental engineer.

Few of the top contributing countries have adequate infrastructure for handling trash disposal, the study noted.

Even with a well-developed infrastructure to handle solid waste, the U.S. contributed 40,000 to 110,000 metric tons per year, and ranked 20th, the study found. A high per-capita use of plastic and dense coastal population means that litter had a bigger impact, Jambeck said.

"It's not about finger-pointing, but examining things that strongly influence a country's rank on this list," Jambeck said.

Although flotillas of plastic trash have been reported in Earth's oceans since the 1970s, there has been little attempt to quantify its origin, largely because data are incomplete or difficult to obtain.

The ecological effects of the long-lasting trash, much of it matted up in massive ocean gyres, are becoming more clear. Fish and other sea animals can ingest large pieces of plastic that clog their intestines, or can become entangled and suffocate, studies show. As the plastic breaks down to smaller pieces, it can be ingested by smaller invertebrates that are the base of the food chain.

A study last year found that amount of floating plastic in the oceans had not increased since the 1980s, despite increased plastic production. Researchers involved in that work suspect the plastic is still there, but has been breaking down into small pieces that sink. Marine life may be mistaking it for zooplankton and ingesting it.

"Our research is a call of duty to look for and find that missing plastic," said co-author Roland Geyer, a University of California, Santa Barbara, industrial ecologist.

About half of the plastic resin produced (300 million metric tons were manufactured in 2013) is more dense than water, and can be expected to sink, Geyer noted. In addition, he added, the lighter polyethylene can be colonized or otherwise altered and sink.

The study looked only at contributions from coastal population areas, and had to rely on indirect methods to quantify how much plastic was in waste that was not properly disposed of, and then estimate how much was likely to end up in oceans.

"This study is going to suggest that we really research that more," Jambeck said. "We did the best that we could with the data that's available."

Nearly a third of the 100 million metric tons of plastic waste generated by the world's coastal population was mismanaged, according to the study. About 15 percent to 40 percent of that wayward waste likely made it to the ocean, according to data in the study.

If waste practices don't change and economies and populations continue on their present trajectories, the mass of plastic waste likely to end up in oceans will increase by an order of 10 by 2025, the study projected.

But even small changes could stem the growth, the authors suggested. If the top 20 countries cut mismanaged waste in half, for instance, the total mass of mismanaged plastic would drop 41 percent, the study estimated.

"The solutions need to be a combination of global and localized efforts," said Jambeck, who added that she uses a refillable water bottle and reusable grocery bags.

The study defined all trash dumped in landfills in low-income countries to be "inadequately managed," based on research showing that it is poorly controlled and contained.

Very little landfill waste was considered to be mismanaged in the United States, where litter nonetheless had a profound effect.

Researchers forecast mega-drought in parts of US in second half of century

By MONTE MORIN
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Global warming will bring the" risk of a decades-long mega-drought in the American Southwest and Great Plains during the second half of the century, researchers say.

The forecast, published online in the new journal Science Advances, contrasts sharply with other recent assessments that report more uncertainty about future droughts, according to study authors.

The researchers used historic tree ring data and three drought measures to conclude that there was at least an 80 percent chance of a 35-year-long drought occurring by the end of this century.

"Imagine a naturally occurring drought, such as the one occurring in California ... imagine that going on for decades ... that's kind of a mega-drought," said lead study author Benjamin Cook, a climatologist at NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies.

Cook and his coauthors—Toby Ault, a geoscientist at Cornell University, and Jason Smerdon, a climate scientist at the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory of Columbia University—discussed their research at a San Jose teleconference Thursday.

Although many scientists agree that California's current drought is the result of natural climate variability, not global warming, Cook and his colleagues said human-produced greenhouse gases were increasing the likelihood of future droughts.

Higher temperatures, low precipitation and increased rates of evaporation would result in drier soils, they said.

The researchers said their model was based on predicted emissions, and that reductions in those emissions could mitigate future drying.

"We're not necessarily locked into these levels of mega-drought risk if we slow the effects of rising greenhouse gas on global temperatures," Ault said.

Very long and extreme periods of drought have affected Southern California and much of the western United States in the past, although long before the founding of the nation.

According to scientists, paleoclimatic evidence suggests that intense periods of dryness occurred in this region from the 9th to the 14th centuries, a period now called the Medieval Climate Anomaly.

Cook and his colleagues said future drought risk probably will exceed that of the Medieval Anomaly.

"Our results point to a remarkably drier future that falls far outside the contemporary experience of natural and human systems in Western North America, conditions that may present a substantial challenge to adaptation," the authors wrote.

"Human populations in this region, and their associated water resource demands, have been increasing rapidly in recent decades, and these trends are expected to continue for years to come."

IN CELEBRATION OF HIS NEW LIFE

In loving memory of

Schuyler Ingesachel Fritz

Born to life: Juy 27, 1988 • Born to eternal life: February 9, 2015

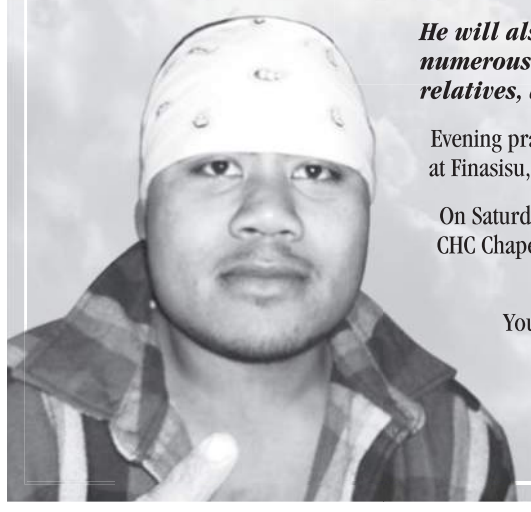
In his new life, he joins:

Sons: †Schuyler Jr. Remengesau
†Larry Luke Remengesau

He also joins: †Edam Masao Franz, †Singeo Franz, †Erechar Franz, †Asao Franz, †Jonathan Franz, †Teruko Franz, †Dawn Bachungor Rechemang, †Mamang Ochebirang Fritz, †Helbert Fritz, †SatskoTelmetang, †Ferista Fritz, †Norma O. Fritz, †Rich Mungwaath

His Memories will live forever in the hearts of his:

Parents: Lee Marvin Remengesau and Nenette H. Fritz
Brother: Marwin
Sisters: Marla (PaulKanrow) - Kaiden & Jaiden
Sharla – Daniel &Danaleen
Kiara
Kialeen
Grandmother: MahensiaMereb



He will also be missed and remembered by numerous aunts, uncles, cousins, nephews, nieces, relatives, and friends.

Evening prayer will start on Wednesday, Feb 18, 2015 at 7 pm at Finasisu, the residence of Richard and Potence Mungwaath.

On Saturday, Feb 21, 2015, memorial service will be held at CHC Chapel from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm then his body will be escorted to Tanapag Cemetary.

Your kind expressions of support and prayers are greatly appreciated.

From Parents, Siblings, and the Entire Family

Life & Style

Tail-wagging beagle wins best in show at Westminster

NEW YORK (AP)—A soft-spoken beagle really raised a ruckus.

Wagging her tail a mile a minute, Miss P became America's top dog Tuesday night by winning best in show in a big surprise at the Westminster Kennel Club.

At 4, Miss P is a grand-niece of Uno—in 2008, the immensely popular hound barked and bayed his way to becoming the only previous beagle to win at the most prominent U.S. dog show.

AP

Miss P, a 15-inch beagle, and handler William Alexander, react after winning the Best in Show at the Westminster Kennel Club dog show Tuesday, Feb. 17, 2015, in New York.

Miss P, however, didn't let out a peep in the ring.

"She is a princess," handler Will Alexander said.

A quiet one, too. Not your normal, everyday, vocal beagle, as most owners can attest.

Instead, it was the packed crowd at Madison Square Garden that seemed to loudly gasp when judge David Merriam picked her in a dog show world shocker.

Only a half-hour after her win did the 15-inch Miss P, a breed known as "big beagles," start making a noise. And that was only because her people were giving her treats.

The best-of-seven final ring was full of favorites.

Matisse, a Portuguese water dog that's a cousin of President Barack Obama's family pet Sunny, was the top-winning male in show dog history with 238. Swagger the old English sheepdog finished second at Westminster in 2013 and clearly drew the biggest cheers.

A Skye terrier came in second this time. A standard poodle, a shih tzu owned by notorious heiress Patty Hearst and an English springer spaniel also made it to the last ring.

Miss P was the one that charmed Merriam. He is a retired California trial-courts judge and has spent more than 50 years with dogs, but this was the first time he'd judged a best in show.

"She never let me down. She didn't make any mistakes," Alexander said.

There's no prize money for winning Westminster. Instead, there's prestige forever in dog circles, plus the possibility of lucrative breeding rights.

The tri-colored Miss P also earned a full day Wednesday—appearances on morning TV shows, a meeting with Donald Trump, lunch at prominent Manhattan restaurant Sardi's and a walk-on part in the Broadway hit musical "Kinky Boots."

It was the 20th best in show win in the United States for the Canadian-born Miss P. The dog lives in both Milton and Enderby, British Columbia. Her call name is short for Peyton, and her official champion's name is Tashtins Lookin for Trouble.

One of her owners is Eddie Dziuk, a co-owner of Uno. Her other co-owners are Lori Crandlemire and daughter Kaitlyn.

Uno turns 10 in May and now lives in Texas with owner Caroline Dowell, across the street from her ranch.

'Modern Family' to air episode that takes place only online

LOS ANGELES (AP)—How to keep the "modern" in "Modern Family" in its sixth season? Create an episode that plays out completely on a computer and in the realm of social media.

That's what's in store Feb. 25 on the ABC comedy's "Connection Lost," a half-hour that revolves around Claire Dunphy's (Julie Bowen) frantic effort to locate daughter Haley (Sarah Hyland) after they squabble.

Other than a few scenes shot with the MacBook Pro, the episode was captured entirely with iPhone 6s and iPads, series co-creator and executive producer Steve Levitan said.

ABC and producer Twentieth Century Fox Television announced the project Tuesday.

This isn't Apple's first starring role on "Modern Family." On the brink of the iPad's retail debut in 2010, the tablet was portrayed as a sought-after birthday gift.

AP

This photo provided by Twentieth Century Fox Television shows, from left, Claire Dunphy, Jay Pritchett, and Phil Dunphy, in a scene from the episode, "Connection Lost," of "Modern Family."

Levitan said the upcoming episode involved no product-placement compensation to Apple and resulted from an epiphany he had during an online experience involving one of his college-age daughters.

"I had emails open, some websites... then my daughter showed up" on FaceTime, he recounted. "I could not only see her, but I could see me, and there was something going on behind me, my wife or somebody."

"I realized on that screen, you could tell so much about my life," Levitan said. It occurred to him that format would be fitting for "Modern Family," he told reporters after a sneak peek at the episode.

All the comedy's households represent a contemporary family in some way, he said, including that of gay couple Mitch and Cam, who are adoptive parents, and Jay and Gloria, a cross-cultural, cross-generational pair. With Claire, Phil and their children, the marker is how they communicate.

In the comedy's debut episode in 2009, the parents summoned Haley to dinner by calling out to her, Levitan recalled. Her response: "Why are you yelling, why don't you just text me?"

The in-progress "Connection Lost" looked very much like Levitan's account of his own experience, with a "Modern Family" overlay.

Claire, about to board a flight, must rely on her laptop to get in touch with her immediate and extended family—who pop up via their own computers or smartphones—for help in finding Haley.

The setup allowed for new comedy avenues, said Megan Ganz, "Modern Family" co-executive producer and the episode's co-writer with Levitan. He served as director.

When Claire is online with her brother, Mitch (Jesse Tyler Ferguson), she feigns surprise that he hasn't received her birthday gift as she searches online for a belated one to send. Nice try, he says, since he can check the date on the order when it arrives.

Other funny bits are tucked on to Claire's Facebook page or will be available through links, such as daughter Alex Dunphy's (Ariel Winter) application to Yale University.

Editor Tony Orcena and motion graphics producer John Brown also had key roles in creating the episode that required, as Brown said, each element seen on Claire's Facebook pages to be "handmade."

Levitan credits a 17-minute film, "Noah," which also plays out fully on a computer, with giving him the "proof of concept" that such an approach could sustain an audience's interest and allow for a complicated story.

He said the young Canadian filmmakers behind "Noah" were unable to accept his invitation to contribute to the "Modern Family" episode because of other work.

Apple was informed about the episode, "loved the idea" and provided iPhones for the production, Levitan said, adding that it's commonplace for most major computer companies to have ongoing relationships with TV shows.

"This came from life and it made sense," said Levitan, who cheerfully described himself as "super-geeky" about technology.

Michelle Obama dances with Big Bird on 'Billy on the Street'

NEW YORK (AP)—It may stand as the dizziest dozen minutes in first lady Michelle Obama's reign. But she appeared to be having a ball while she put the word out: Kids and parents should eat healthier by adding fruits and vegetables to their daily menu.

To raise awareness for her "Eat Brighter" campaign, Mrs. Obama joined zany quizmaster Billy Eichner for a special edition of his "Billy on the Street" comedy game show, posted on the Funny or Die website.

Instead of his usual frantic sidewalk Q-and-As, the excitable Eichner welcomed Mrs. Obama to a Washington supermarket, where she competed with "Sesame Street" avian Big Bird as well as past "Billy on the Street" guest Elena in a contest he called "Ariana Grande or Eating a Carrot?"

Among the absurd questions Eichner posed to his trio of contestants:

■ "Gwyneth Paltrow makes a fantastic broccoli-and-arugula soup. Does that matter, yes or no?"

"No," replied Elena after setting off her buzzer.

"Yes, it DOES!" Eichner screeched. "She has a website!"

■ "Who's more deserving of a Kennedy Center honor—Martin Short or a box of frozen corn?"

"The corn," responded Mrs. Obama.

"NO!" Eichner erupted. "Martin Short! He's a genius. He played Ed Grimley!"

If these proceedings lacked the dignity of, say, a White House state dinner, Mrs. Obama wore a nonstop grin as she proved herself an intrepid sport, even when, for a special FLOTUS Bonus Round, Eichner directed her to "slow dance with Big Bird while I sing 'I Don't Want to Miss a Thing.'"

She did and he did.

Then she gamely pushed Eichner through the store in a shopping cart while he recited Gwyneth Paltrow's Oscar acceptance speech for "Shakespeare in Love."

And Eichner's final challenge: "Give me a hug and a knowing look that tells me it's all gonna be OK."

Mrs. Obama's grand prize: A huge photo of pop singer Ariana Grande's ponytail.

Not to mention her leading role in a not-so-gentle reminder that fruits and vegetables can be good to eat.

Drake's surprise album sets Spotify records

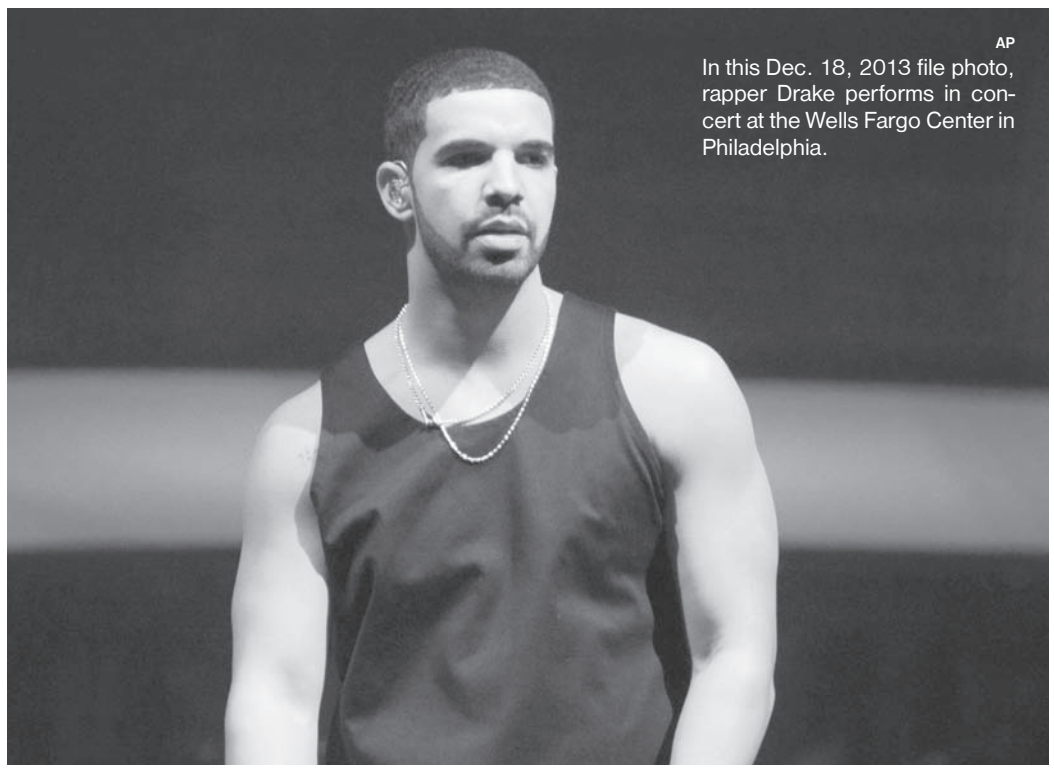
NEW YORK (AP)—Drake's surprise album has set records on Spotify.

The music streaming service said Tuesday that the rapper's new album, "If You're Reading This It's Too Late," set the record for most streams from an album in its debut week in the U.S. The album, released Friday, was streamed more than 17.3 million times in three days.

Drake's 2013 album, "Nothing Was the Same," previously had the record for most streams in a debut week with 15.8 million.

The new album also set a record for most streams in a single day for an album in the U.S. with 6.8 million streams on Saturday.

Billboard reported that the album will sell about 500,000 units in its first week.



AP

In this Dec. 18, 2013 file photo, rapper Drake performs in concert at the Wells Fargo Center in Philadelphia.

HBO says 2 more seasons for Oliver

]**NEW YORK** (AP)—HBO says it has picked up two more seasons of John Oliver's "Last Week Tonight," which puts to rest any thought that Oliver would return to Comedy Central to replace Jon Stewart on "The Daily Show."

Oliver just began the second season at HBO of his critically acclaimed comedy show. HBO said it has agreed to air 35 new episodes each in 2016 and 2017.

Michael Lombardo, president of HBO programming, said Tuesday that Oliver's "unique ability to deliver socially significant commentary week after week, along with his innate comedic brilliance, puts John in a class by himself."

Oliver came to HBO's attention when he subbed for Stewart at "The Daily Show" during the summer of 2013. Stewart announced last week he was leaving "The Daily Show."

MTV exec Van Toffler exiting

NEW YORK (AP)—Veteran MTV executive Van Toffler says that he's leaving the network where he's worked for almost 28 years.

Toffler began in the business department at MTV in 1987 and rose to his current job as president of Viacom's Music and Logo Group, meaning he supervises MTV, MTV2, VHI, VHI Classic, CMT and Logo. He said he will leave in April, but will still help produce some events like the "MTV Video Music Awards."

"To be clear, this is a very personal decision about pursuing the loud and insatiable part of my failed musician/poet soul that needs to purely make great stuff," Toffler said in a note to MTV staff on Tuesday.

Ex-college football player admits stalking Hollywood mogul

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A former North Dakota college football player has been given probation for stalking billionaire David Geffen.

Jamie Ralph Kuntz, 21, pleaded no contest Feb. 9 to one misdemeanor count of stalking and was ordered to stay 200 yards away from Geffen for 10 years, said Jane Robison, a spokeswoman for the Los Angeles district attorney.

Kuntz was charged with felony stalking and five counts of violating a restraining order to stay away from Geffen's homes in Beverly Hills, California, and Malibu, California, after being convicted of trespassing on the entertainment mogul's property.

Defense lawyer David Wohl said Kuntz got into trouble for showing up at Geffen's homes after their short-term relationship ended.

Wohl said he thought Kuntz would have prevailed at trial, but had already been in jail more than three months because he couldn't afford the $150,000 bail and didn't want to spend more time awaiting his day in court.

"It's celebrity justice in reverse," Wohl said. "The victim is a celebrity, and judges are afraid of something happening to them."

Geffen, who made his fortune as a record producer and co-founded DreamWorks Pictures, is a powerful player in Hollywood.

Kuntz said he was kicked off the North Dakota State College of Sciences football team two years ago because he was gay after being seen kissing a 65-year-old boyfriend at a game. The coach said he was removed for lying about the kiss.

As part of the plea deal, Los Angeles prosecutors reduced the stalking charge and dropped the other counts.

Kuntz must attend psychiatric counseling twice a week for a year as a condition of his two-year probation term, Robison said.

AP

In this Sept. 11, 2012 file photo, Jamie Ralph Kuntz poses for a photograph at a football field in Dickinson, N.D.

BlackBerry again sues Ryan Seacrest startup over keyboards

NEW YORK (AP)—Smartphone maker BlackBerry has revived a legal battle against a startup co-founded by Ryan Seacrest, saying its iPhone keyboard rips off the design from BlackBerry phones' physical keyboards.

BlackBerry Ltd. won a preliminary injunction last year against Typo Products' first keyboard. But Typo released a second-generation keyboard in December. Called the Typo2, it is a case that gives iPhones a physical keyboard below the touch screens.

In a federal lawsuit filed Monday in San Francisco, BlackBerry said Typo is still infringing on BlackBerry's patents, including those related to design, backlighting and typing automation technologies. Among the claims, BlackBerry said design elements copied include having at least two of the three rows of keys extend to the side edges, and having little vertical space between the rows of keys.

"These elements ... are distinctive and serve to identify BlackBerry as the source of BlackBerry's products," BlackBerry, which is based in Waterloo, Ontario, said in its lawsuit.

Seacrest started Typo with entrepreneur Laurence Hallier in 2013. Hallier was named as a defendant, but Seacrest was not. The company declined to comment on the lawsuit. Typo2 is available for the iPhone 5 and 5s for $79 and the iPhone 6 for $99.

Physical keyboards remain one of BlackBerry's signature features, even as the phone's popularity has waned since Apple released its first iPhone in 2007.

Compulsive shoplifter knows it's wrong, but just can't stop

DEAR ABBY: I need help! I have shoplifted several times. I was caught and have a police record. I am a grandparent. I know it's wrong, and I don't do it all the time. Is this a mental disorder, or am I just being stupid? If I know this is wrong, why do I keep doing it? And where do I start to look for help?

STICKY FINGERS

DEAR STICKY FINGERS: Some people shoplift because they are criminals, some do it for "thrills," and others do it to make up for something else that is missing in their lives. Because you know what you are doing is wrong, would like to understand your compulsion and want to stop, the person to discuss this with is a psychologist. Your physician can refer you to one, or contact your state psychological association to find someone in your area.

DEAR ABBY: My girlfriend and I have called it quits after three years. Distance was the main reason. It wasn't a bad breakup, but it's still a difficult transition for both of us. She would rather we not see or speak to each other for a while to let things heal.

Her birthday is coming up soon, and I don't feel right not acknowledging it. Her special day means a lot to her, and I still love and respect her for who she is. Is sending a card and gift appropriate, or should I just leave her be?

DISTANCE WAS THE REASON

DEAR DISTANCE: Send a birthday card and tell her that because the day is special, you couldn't let it pass unacknowledged. It shouldn't be necessary to send a gift in light of the fact that you are no longer a couple.

DEAR ABBY: My daughter is getting married in September. In June, she's planning to have a bachelorette party in Mexico.

My husband and I have never been to Mexico and thought, "Why not kill two birds with one stone?" Because I'm afraid of flying, I want my husband and son to also go to Mexico, but stay at a different resort. The party is only for three days, so when everyone else goes home, my husband and I will extend our stay.

I have gone on girl vacations to Las Vegas before, where my husband has traveled with me and then gone and done his own thing. We would meet up after the girl vacation. I don't see a problem with his traveling to Mexico, but my daughter absolutely objects. What do you think?

NO PROBLEM IN COLORADO

DEAR NO: Could this be a telltale warning sign of a budding bridezilla? Your daughter appears to be making a problem where none exists. If your husband and son will stay at a different resort, they might as well be back in the states. That they are in Mexico shouldn't inconvenience or inhibit your daughter at all.

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO MY ASIAN READERS: The Lunar New Year begins today. This year is the year of the goat. People born in the year of the goat are gentle, serene, calm and mild-mannered. They are creative, persevering, resilient and possess excellent defensive skills. They prefer to be in groups and work in teams and, I am told, they can be flirtatious. A happy, healthy and prosperous new year to all who celebrate it.

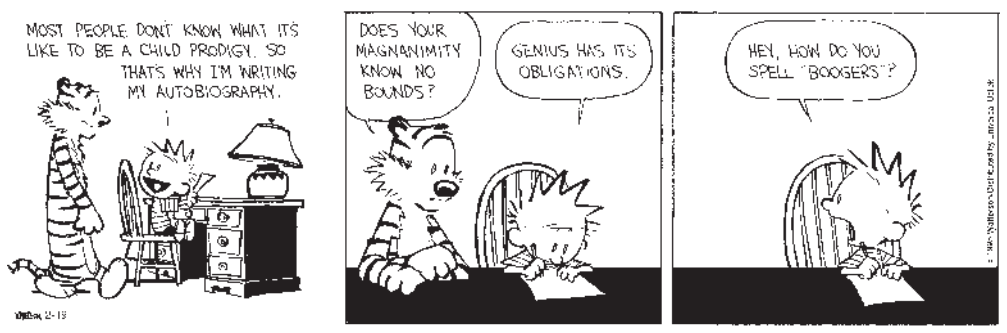
Love, ABBY

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

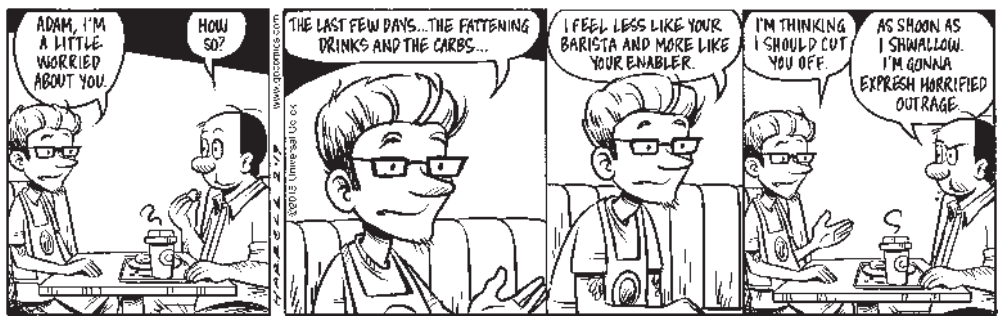

MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE A CHILD PRODIGY. SO THAT'S WHY I'M WRITING MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY.
DOES YOUR MAGNANIMITY KNOW NO BOUNDS?
GENIUS HAS ITS OBLIGATIONS.
HEY, HOW DO YOU SPELL "BOOGERS"?

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


ADAM, I'M A LITTLE WORRIED ABOUT YOU.
HOW SO?
THE LAST FEW DAYS...THE FATTENING DRINKS AND THE CARBS...
I FEEL LESS LIKE YOUR BARISTA AND MORE LIKE YOUR ENABLER.
I'M THINKING I SHOULD CUT YOU OFF.
AS SHOON AS I SHWALLOW. I'M GONNA EXPRESH HORRIFIED OUTRAGE.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

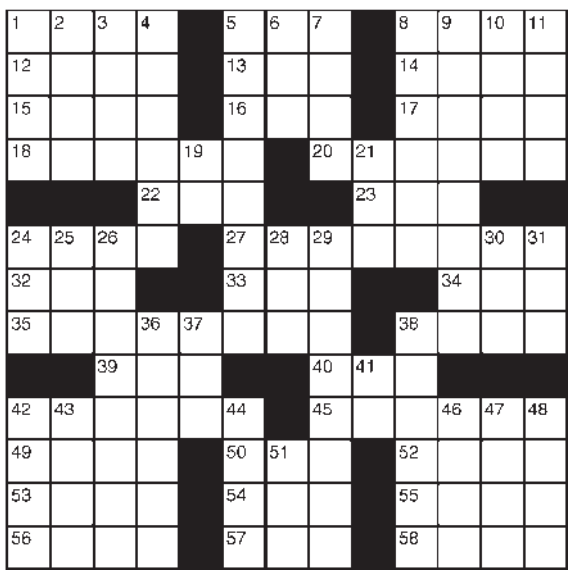
ACROSS
1 Move like a moth
5 Comical Caesar
8 Man or Wight
12 Thin wood strip
13 Pair
14 Celeb
15 Acknowledge
16 Harry Potter's pal
17 The Supremes, e.g.
18 Jipijapa hat
20 Moral principles
22 Swindle
23 Mischievous kid
24 Trans-Siberian Railway city
27 Shared rumors
32 Cauldron
33 Tolkien creature
34 Before
35 Wizard
38 Snatch
39 Furniture wood
40 First lady?
42 Lent a hand
45 Breathing passage
49 Scandinavian capital
50 Einstein's birthplace
52 Guy
53 Tournament format
54 Lawyer's due
55 Related (to)
56 Burning heap
57 Evergreen type
58 Profits

DOWN
1 Envelope part
2 Volcanic outflow
3 Lay — thick
4 Heavy blow
5 No one you know
6 — Jima
7 Finished
8 Narrow strips of land
9 Ecdysiast
10 Secular
11 Cupid's alias
19 Brief time (Abbr.)
21 "— the season ..."
24 Chances, for short
25 Cattle call?
26 Pram
28 Inseparable
29 Parade ribbon
30 Historic period
31 Society newbie
36 "Scarface"
37 — out a living
38 Teutonic
41 Half dozen, in a way
42 Barrel part
43 Catch sight of
44 Homer's favorite beer brand
46 Hear the rooster
47 Settled down
48 Longings
51 Mainlander's memento

Solution time: 24 mins.

O	W	N	S	■	O	A	K	■	S	C	A	M
R	E	A	P	■	B	R	A	■	H	A	L	E
C	A	P	A	C	I	T	Y	■	E	P	O	S
S	L	A	S	H	■	■	S	L	E	J	T	H
■	■	■	M	I	S	C	■	E	T	C	■	■
D	O	C	S	■	L	A	B	S	■	H	A	M
A	V	A	■	C	A	P	O	S	■	I	■	■
Y	A	P	■	L	Y	R	E	■	E	N	D	S
■	■	■	S	E	A	■	I	R	A	N	■	■
G	R	I	P	P	E	■	■	M	A	N	■	C
R	A	Z	E	■	C	A	P	Y	B	A	R	A
A	G	E	E	■	R	I	O	■	L	I	E	N
M	E	D	S	■	U	R	L	■	E	L	S	E

Yesterday's answer 2-19



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Benicio Del Toro, 48; Seal, 52; Jeff Daniels, 60; Smokey Robinson, 75.

Happy Birthday: Be careful how you handle others. This will be a year that will require serious thought before you take action. The choices you make will have long-term effects on where you reside and your relationships with others. Let your intuition guide you and your intelligence override your need to be impulsive. One step at a time will ensure forward motion. Your numbers are 4, 7, 10, 21, 32, 37, 45.

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Save up for something you want. A networking event will present an opportunity that you cannot refuse. Don't let a responsibility you feel stand in your way. Find a way to honor your commitment and take advantage of what's being offered. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Ask for favors, but be prepared to give an in-depth analysis and a well-thought-out plan of compensation. Contribute something worthwhile to a cause you believe in, and you will impress the people you want to conduct business with. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Take a break. Regain your strength and protect against an emotional situation that will leave you upset and non-productive. Do whatever it takes to avoid letting your personal life interfere with your professional decisions. ✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Venture in new directions. Familiarize yourself with different cultures and ways of doing things, and you will discover options you never knew existed. Educational activities will give you a new slant on the way you do things. Romance is highlighted. ✪✪✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Think before taking action. Don't believe everything you hear, especially if it has to do with risky joint money ventures. Get back on track and make the personal changes that will ensure better health, wealth and state of mind. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Partnerships will be tense if you let your emotions take over. Honesty and sincerity will be your best approach when dealing with others. Don't feel the need to pay for someone else's mistake. Use logic and reasonable alternatives to reach your objective. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Make an effort to take care of business. Leaving unfinished business for someone else to deal with will cause a rift in your relationship. Use your personal skills, knowledge and physical abilities to get things done on time and without leaning on others. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): A mental health day, working on creative endeavors or spending time with someone you love will help ease your mind and help you find a solution to a situation that's bothering you. A conversation with someone could change your life. ✪✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): You will face disillusionment regarding someone you thought you could trust. Make the necessary changes to protect your physical and emotional well-being. Money and possessions should be safely tucked away to avoid loss. An investment you make will grow in value. ✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Your friendships will be valued and the suggestions you make taken seriously. Reconnecting with someone you used to know will open your eyes to what you want. Preparation will lead to success, not impulsiveness. ✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Focus on material gains and job opportunities. Search online job posts and check out changes going on in whatever industry you belong to. You can make a move if you are quick to respond. A partnership will lead to a positive alternative. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Emotions will be hard to suppress. Don't allow a colleague to mislead, misinterpret or take advantage of you. Research and get your facts straight before you enter discussions with a potential rival. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are a team player. You are compromising and insightful.

*Eugenia's website—**eugenialast.com**, Eugenia's android app @ **http://bit.ly/exhoro** and join Eugenia on **twitter/facebook/linkedin**.*

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

			7		5			
3								8
	9	4			1	5	3	
5		2						6
				6				
4						3		5
	1	3	9			7	6	
2								9
			6		7			

Difficulty Level ★★★ 2/19

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

1	5	2	8	4	7	3	6	9
9	3	4	6	2	5	8	1	7
6	8	7	1	9	3	4	5	2
8	1	6	7	5	2	9	3	4
2	7	9	3	6	4	5	8	1
3	4	5	9	8	1	2	7	6
5	9	1	2	7	8	6	4	3
7	2	8	4	3	6	1	9	5
4	6	3	5	1	9	7	2	8

Difficulty Level ★★★ 2/19

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

CUSTOM HOME FLOOR PLANS **Solution: 8 letters**

E	B	B	H	S	Y	M	B	O	L	S	P	A	C	E
D	T	A	C	S	W	O	R	R	A	D	Y	E	F	G
M	E	A	Ⓣ	Ⓤ	Ⓑ	D	N	U	O	R	G	D	L	A
B	E	S	E	H	S	E	V	O	T	S	R	A	O	R
B	L	A	K	R	L	L	R	N	E	O	S	S	O	A
R	A	O	S	A	C	S	A	H	T	S	N	P	R	G
S	C	S	C	U	O	P	S	A	E	O	E	E	E	V
M	I	S	I	K	R	I	R	C	I	N	D	C	H	I
O	R	Y	O	N	N	E	A	S	D	O	M	T	S	E
O	T	E	L	I	G	N	N	S	R	W	C	H	A	W
R	E	C	F	I	R	E	P	L	A	C	E	S	W	I
T	M	I	R	U	M	H	W	L	W	T	L	A	H	N
S	O	F	F	I	O	A	L	I	I	P	L	C	S	D
E	E	F	D	M	C	S	F	S	N	R	A	T	I	O
R	G	O	E	S	K	N	I	S	G	E	R	M	D	W

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Arrows, Aspect, Basin, Bath, Block, Cash, Cellar, Create, Desk, Dimensions, Dishwasher, Doors, Drawing, Family, Finishes, Fireplaces, Floor, Furnaces, Garage, Geometrical, Glass, Ground, Home, Map, Measure, Mock, Model, Office, Open, Pantry, Ratio, Redo, Refrigerator, Restrooms, Scale, Sinks, Site, Sketch, Space, Stoves, Symbols, Tub, View, Walls, Window, Wine

Yesterday's Answer: Cold Light

To purchase the **WONDERWORD MILLENNIUM SERIES #1**, order online at www.WonderWordBooks.com. (Contains 100 puzzles.)

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Saipan Tribune

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Rental Coordinator

Provides clerical support which will include communicating with customers regarding service requests, maintenance and rental inquiries coordination. Schedules and dispatches maintenance staff and technicians to specific work site. Must be proficient in typing and good at written and oral communication. Fair knowledge in MS Office including Word and Excel. Must be able to consistently demonstrate good customer service and interpersonal skills at work. High school diploma or equivalent plus previous work experience in cash handling and sales preferred. Can work flexible hours and available on weekends, holidays and weeknights.

Applications can be obtained and submitted at L&T Group of Companies, Ltd. Human Resources Office located on the 2nd Floor, JP Center Building at Beach Road, Garapan. Salaries will commensurate with qualifications and experience. To be considered, applications must be submitted no later than 5:00pm, Monday, March 02, 2015.

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- Ability to speak English
- Police Clearance
- References

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330 HERNAN CORTEZ AVENUE, SUITE 200
HAGATNA, GUAM 96910 TELEPHONE: (671) 472-8869/69
FACSIMILE: (671) 477-2511

Attorney for Plaintiff

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

ANZ GUAM, INC., formerly known as CITIZENS SECURITY BANKS (GUAM), INC.,
Plaintiff,
vs.
JESUS T. LIZAMA dba VICTORIA HOTEL, J&JEV ENTERPRISES, INC., and the BANK OF GUAM,
Defendants.

Civil Action No. 00-0296 D

NOTICE OF POSTPONEMENT OF AUCTION/ JUDICIAL SALE.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that the Auction/Judicial Sale for the following properties described below is hereby **POSTPONED** until further notice. The auction presently scheduled for March 27, 2015 at 10 am the Law Office of Robert T. Torres will not proceed and shall be postponed. The Auction/Judicial Sale shall be re-noticed by publication in the same manner as authorized by the Superior Court, when so deemed appropriate by the undersigned appointed Auctioneer. No bids shall be accepted nor considered until the appropriate re-notice of the auction.

AUCTION/JUDICIAL SALE: POSTPONED FOR THE FOLLOWING LOTS:

a. LOT 001 D 13, (formerly known as Block 3, Lot 1), as more particularly described on Drawing/Cadastral Plat No. 001 D 00, the original of which was registered 30 SEP 70 as Document No. 512 at Land Registry, Saipan.

b. LOT 001 D 14, (formerly known as Block 3, Lot 2), as more particularly described on Drawing/Cadastral Plat No. 001 D 00, the original of which was registered 30 SEP 70 as Document No. 512 at Land Registry, Saipan.

c. TRACT 21732-9, part of original Tract 21732-R1, AH 140), as more particularly described on Drawing/Cadastral Plat No. 2085/84, the original of which was recorded 08 AUG 84 as Document No. 84-1439 at the Commonwealth Recorder's Office, Saipan.

SO NOTICED this 17th day of February, 2015.

/s/ Robert T. Torres, Auctioneer

APARTMENTS FOR RENT

Realty Management Services

Fina Sisu Terraces
Small 1-BR, 1-BTH. Unit approximately 284 sq.ft. **$250**/month.
2-BR, 1-BTH. **$350-$550**/month. Close to NMC campus. MIHA applicants accepted.

Ocean View Terraces
(Navy Hill)) Unit Approximately 642 sq/ft
Luxury 2BR & 1BTH Apt with private balcony & beautiful view.
$600/month

Sunset View Terraces
(Navy Hill) Unit Approximately 642 sq/ft
Luxury 2BR & 1BTH Apt with private balcony & beautiful view.
$550/month

Hilltop Condominium*
(San Vicente) Unit approximately 1,024sq/ft
Luxury 2BR & 2BTH Apt with private balcony & majestic view. **$700**/month
Luxury 1BR & 1BTH approximately 600 sq/ft
$500/month
***Wi-Fi & nighttime security excluded**

FEATURES:
- **Fully Furnished**
- **Back-up Generator**
- **Air-conditioning in all rooms**
- **FREE WiFi**
- **Laundry Area**
- **Nighttime Security**
- **Ample Parking**
- **24hr water**

Please visit our website at www.saipan-properties.com Call for an appointment 235-6527/8.

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

BEST SUNSHINE INTERNATIONAL

Best Sunshine is committed to develop Saipan's first Integrated Resort, which includes hotels, retail shops, restaurants, spa & wellness, health & aesthetics tourism, conference, casino and themed entertainment. We invite interested professionals to apply for the following position.

GUEST RELATIONS OFFICER

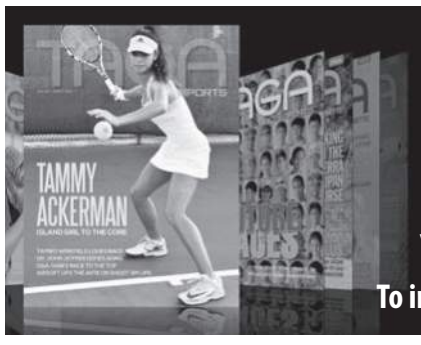
Job Responsibilities:
- Act as an introducer to plan and coordinate the provision of friendly, efficient services to guests.
- Make dining and other reservations for patrons, and obtain tickets for events.
- Make travel arrangements for sightseeing and other tours.
- Receive, store, and deliver luggage and mail.
- Perform office duties on a temporary basis when needed.
- Pick up and deliver items, or run errands for guests.
- Arrange for the replacement of items lost by travelers.
- Act as interpreters or translators when patrons require such services.
- Perform general administration duties including but not limited to filing, meeting preparation, travel bookings, online research etc.
- Perform other related duties as assigned.

Minimum Job Requirements:
- Must be a high school graduate or equivalent.
- Knowledge of the structure and content of the Korean or the Mandarin language preferred.
- Minimum of two years of customer service or hospitality preferred.
- Applicants will be primarily based in our Saipan head office but will be expected to travel between head office and other locations (like Hong Kong, Beijing, Macao, Japan, etc.).

Salary is commensurate with experience and education. Please email your complete detailed resume to hr@bestsunshineint.com. Background check may be required before employment.

Thank you, Si Yu'os Ma'ase, and Olomwaay for your interest in Best Sunshine!

CLICK IT OR TICKET
DAY & NIGHT



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A-Rod gives apology but no explanation ahead of return

NEW YORK (AP)—It appears the only place Alex Rodriguez might detail his drug use is on a witness stand.

The ever-controversial New York Yankees star decided against holding a news conference ahead of his return to the team following a one-year absence. He issued a vague five-paragraph handwritten apology Tuesday "for the mistakes that led to my suspension" but failed to provide specifics about how and why he resumed using performance-enhancing drugs for at least the second stretch of his celebrated career.

Readying to report back to the Yankees following an unprecedented season-long ban for violating baseball's drug agreement and labor contract, Rodriguez apologized to team officials in person during a meeting at the ballpark on Feb. 10. They suggested he hold a news conference before the start of spring training this Friday and offered the use of Yankee Stadium.

Rodriguez declined.

He held an apologetic session with reporters in 2009 at the team's facility in Tampa, Florida, after he admitted using banned PEDs while with Texas from 2001-03. That was before Major League Baseball had a drug agreement with penalties.

"The only thing I ask from this group today and the American people is to judge me from this day forward," he said then.

But he apparently did not want to face questions from media about his latest involvement with PEDs - although he could be required to testify in federal court if his cousin, Yuri Sucart, and former University of Miami pitching coach Lazaro Collazo go to trial on charges they committed crimes in their involvement with the Biogenesis of America drug clinic. Rodriguez admitted in court documents he used PEDs.

AP

In this Aug. 2, 2013, file photo New York Yankees' Alex Rodriguez answers questions from the media at a news conference following a Class AA baseball game with the Trenton Thunder against the Reading Phillies in Trenton, N.J.

ESPN The Magazine said it planned to release an interview Wednesday in which Rodriguez said he thinks Biogenesis owner Anthony Bosch gave him a placebo. Rodriguez also said he considered retirement early in his suspension, is in therapy and secretly visits colleges. He told ESPN he took a marketing class during his suspension and wants to complete his education.

Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig suspended the three-time AL MVP for 211 games in August 2013, citing conduct from 2010-12 uncovered during MLB's investigation of Biogenesis, which was based in Coral Gables, Florida, not far from Rodriguez's home.

Arbitrator Fredric Horowitz reduced the penalty to the 2014 season, finding "clear and convincing evidence" Rodriguez used three banned substances and twice tried to obstruct baseball's drug investigation.

Hoping to overcome the suspension and a pair of hip surgeries, Rodriguez is due to report to the Yankees on Feb. 25 and start workouts the following day. He has not played a full season since 2007.

Rodriguez addressed his statement "to the fans" and said "I take full responsibility for the mistakes that led to my suspension for the 2014 season" without explaining what those mistakes were.

"I regret that my actions made the situation worse than it needed to be," he wrote in legible blue script. "To Major League Baseball, the Yankees, the Steinbrenner family, the players' association and you, the fans, I can only say I'm sorry."

Rodriguez said "I accept the fact that many of you will not believe my apology or anything that I say at this point. I understand why, and that's on me."

"It was gracious of the Yankees to offer me the use of Yankee Stadium for this apology but I decided the next time I am in Yankee Stadium, I should be in pinstripes doing my job," he said.

Bosch was sentenced to four years in prison on Tuesday after pleading guilty in October to a charge of conspiracy to distribute testosterone.

New York says Rodriguez, who turns 40 in July, has been replaced by Chase Headley at third base and will have to compete for playing time at designated hitter and as an infield backup.

Rodriguez is owed $61 million over the final three seasons of his contract, and the Yankees say they do not plan to pay five $6 million bonuses detailed in a marketing agreement for historic achievements he may reach. Rodriguez is fifth on the career list with 654 home runs, and the deal contemplates the first bonus being triggered when he ties Willie Mays at 660.

Before apologizing to the Yankees, Rodriguez met last month with Rob Manfred, who succeeded Selig as baseball commissioner on Jan. 25.

"I served the longest suspension in the history of the league for PED use," Rodriguez said. "The commissioner has said the matter is over. The players' association has said the same. The Yankees have said the next step is to play baseball. I'm ready to put this chapter behind me and play some ball. This game has been my single biggest passion since I was a teenager. When I go to spring training, I will do everything I can to be the best player and teammate possible, earn a spot on the Yankees and help us win."

Dodgers closer Jansen has foot surgery, out 8-12 weeks

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Dodgers closer Kenley Jansen has undergone surgery to remove a growth from a bone in his left foot and will miss the start of the regular season.

The team says Jansen will be on crutches for about 10 days after Tuesday's surgery in Los Angeles. He will then wear a boot for three to four weeks. He's expected to be out about eight to 12 weeks.

The growth was found when Jansen reported discomfort while running last week. An X-ray, MRI and CT scan all showed the problem in the fifth metatarsal of his left foot.

Jansen saved 44 games in 49 chances last season. He had a 2.76 ERA in 68 appearances.

Pitchers and catchers report to spring training in Arizona on Thursday. The Dodgers open the season at home April 6 against San Diego.

Pitchers and catchers report this week to spring training

By JAY COHEN
AP SPORTS WRITER

Washington's star-studded rotation reports to Florida. Matt Harvey continues his comeback with the New York Mets. Joe Maddon takes over the Chicago Cubs, and Russell Martin gets a closer look at Toronto's pitching staff.

While much of the Northeast and Midwest navigates bitter cold and piles of snow, spring training begins in earnest this week when pitchers and catchers file into camps in Florida and Arizona. World Champion San Francisco is one of four National League teams slated to begin on Thursday, and most of the majors' pitchers and backstops will be in place by this weekend.

Following several massive free-agent deals and blockbuster trades, there are plenty of compelling story lines heading into baseball's first spring training since Rob Manfred took over as commissioner in January.

The Nationals strengthened their already solid rotation by signing free agent Max Scherzer to a $210 million, seven-year contract. Now the pressure is on Scherzer to deliver on that big deal and help the reigning NL East champions advance deep into the playoffs for the first time since the franchise moved to Washington.

While Scherzer will attract plenty of attention this spring, it looks as if Tanner Roark will have to adjust to a bullpen role after he had a breakout season a year ago, winning 15 games with a sparking 2.85 ERA. The right-hander is a nice insurance policy for manager Matt Williams should any of the starters get hurt.

Harvey missed all of last season for his recovery from elbow ligament-replacement surgery, and got an early start on spring training by reporting to New York's facility about two weeks before the first scheduled workout. He is hoping to be ready for opening day, but the Mets could decide on a slow and steady approach for the ace right-hander.

It's a brand new day for the Cubs when they report to Arizona after a banner offseason that included the addition of Maddon, who had a 754-705 record during his successful nine-year run with Tampa Bay.

Cubs President Theo Epstein pounced on the quirky skipper after he opted out of his contract with the Rays, dumping Rick Renteria after just one season. Epstein is counting on Maddon to ease the transition of the organization's impressive stable of prospects to the rigors of the majors.

The Cubs were one of baseball's most active teams over the winter. Same goes for Toronto, which is seeking its first playoff appearance since it won the World Series in 1993.

Martin was one of the majors' most prized free agents over the winter, and he opted for an $82 million, five-year contract with the Blue Jays. The three-time All-Star, who was born in Toronto and raised in Montreal, hit .290 with 11 home runs and 67 RBIs with Pittsburgh last season, helping the Pirates to a second straight playoff berth.

Here are a few more things to watch heading into spring training:

HERE COME THE CHAMPS

The last team to win consecutive World Series was the New York Yankees from 1998-2000. The next team to take a crack that feat is San Francisco, which beat Kansas City in seven games for the title last fall.

The good news for the Giants is they have plenty of experience when it comes to defending the title, having also won the World Series in 2010 and 2012. But they failed to make the playoffs following each of their previous two championships, slipping to a 76-86 record in 2013.

One spot to watch this spring is third base, where Casey McGehee replaces Pablo Sandoval after the slugger signed a $95 million, five-year deal with Boston over the winter. Madison Bumgarner returns after throwing a whopping 270 innings last year, and Matt Cain is back after he had surgery in August to remove bone chips from his right elbow.

MANY HAPPY RETURNS

The comeback capital of the majors is New York, which has Harvey hoping to return to form, and three intriguing situations with the Yankees. Left-hander CC Sabathia is back after he missed much of last season with a degenerative cartilage problem in his right knee, and Masahiro Tanaka is looking for a healthy second season after he was limited to 20 mostly impressive starts last year due to an elbow injury.

But one of spring training's biggest stories is the return of Alex Rodriguez after the three-time AL MVP was suspended for last season for violations of baseball's drug agreement and labor contract. Rodriguez's last major league game was Sept. 25, 2013, against Tampa Bay, so no one really knows what to expect from the 39-year-old slugger.

Reds first baseman Joey Votto (left knee), Rangers first baseman Prince Fielder (neck surgery), Orioles third baseman Manny Machado (right knee surgery) and Rockies shortstop Troy Tulowitzki (left hip surgery) are among the other noteworthy comebacks to watch this spring.

NEW FACES IN NEW PLACES

Maddon gets to give the ball to Jon Lester every fifth day after the lefty signed a $155 million, six-year contract with the Cubs. Lester went 16-11 with a 2.46 ERA with Oakland and Boston last year.

The Cubs also traded for catcher Miguel Montero and brought back right-hander Jason Hammel with a $20 million, two-year contract.

The crosstown White Sox have a completely different look this spring. Jeff Samardzija joins the rotation after a trade with Oakland, and closer David Robertson should stabilize the bullpen after agreeing to a $46 million, four-year deal in free agency.

The Red Sox, with Sandoval and slugger Hanley Ramirez ($88 million, four-year contract), and the Padres, with right-hander James Shields ($75 million, four-year deal) and a brand new outfield, are two more teams who bring big expectations to camp following an active offseason.

All in, or sit out: NBA teams decide as trade deadline nears

NEW YORK (AP)—The East was a two-team race at last year's trade deadline, and Larry Bird made the move he thought would win it.

When the Indiana Pacers acquired Evan Turner from rebuilding Philadelphia, they hoped it would provide the scoring punch to beat out Miami and reach the NBA Finals. It didn't, and Turner is now in Boston.

Now the Pacers are trying to get in the postseason, two games out of eighth place and seeking a spark that could slingshot them past others down the bottom of the playoff ladder. Bird promises to be as aggressive as when his team on top.

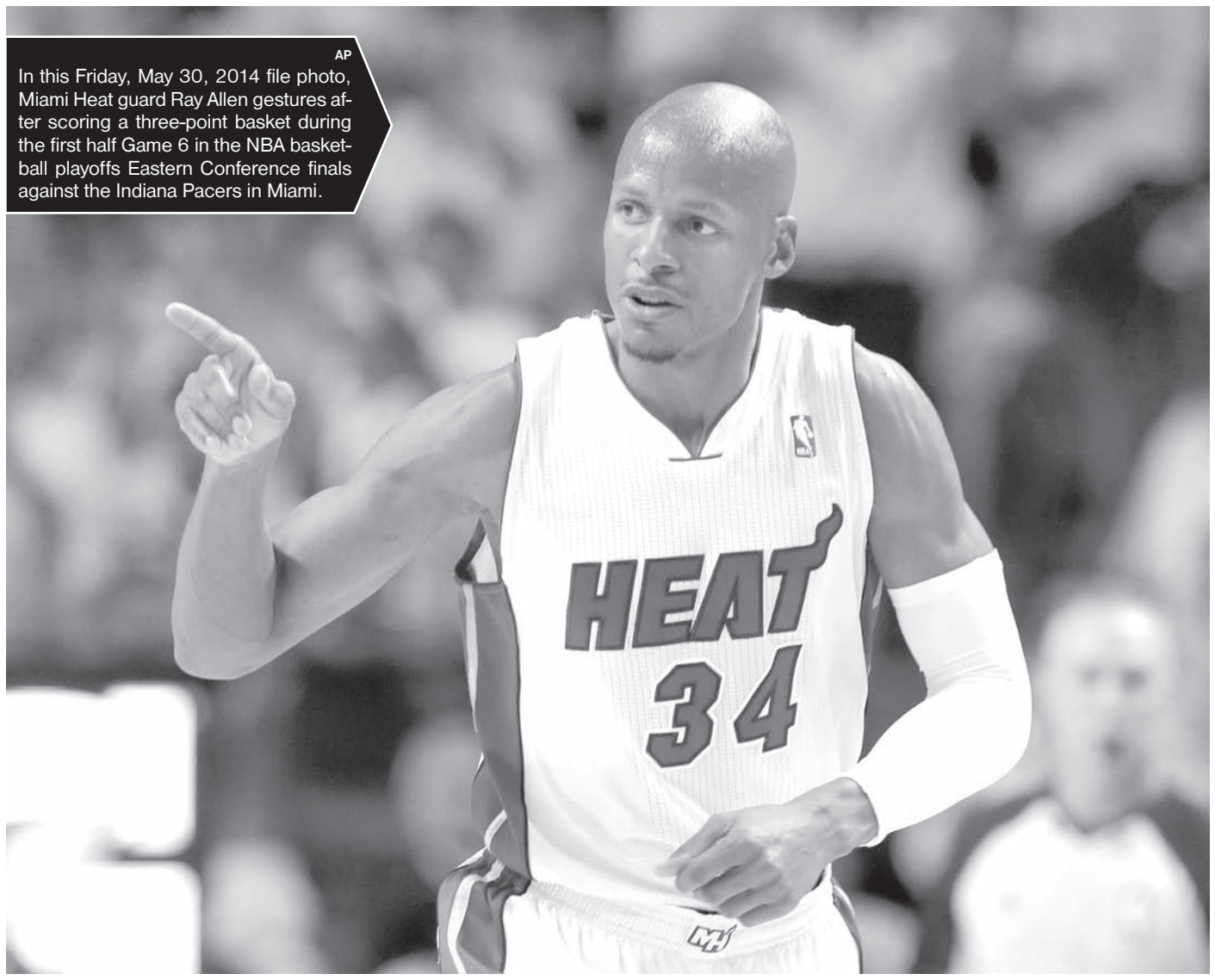
"We're always looking to improve the team and obviously there's a lot of improvement that needs to be done," the Pacers' president said recently. "So we'll look around the league and talk to a lot of different people and see what's out there and hopefully we can do something that makes us better."

If not, he said, he'll wait until the summer.

That's what every NBA team has to decide in the next couple of days.

The trade deadline is Thursday afternoon, and with many teams in contention, the question is whether that makes them more conservative or cautious.

Help could be found in the hours before the NBA returns from its All-Star break. But some will be hesitant to tinker with so little time left in the season. The Turner deal, in which Indiana traded popular veteran Danny Granger, certainly didn't help its locker room chemistry.



AP

In this Friday, May 30, 2014 file photo, Miami Heat guard Ray Allen gestures after scoring a three-point basket during the first half Game 6 in the NBA basketball playoffs Eastern Conference finals against the Indiana Pacers in Miami.

Plus, teams can plug holes by simply opening their wallets, without costing any assets.

Houston signed Josh Smith after he was waived by Detroit, Amare Stoudemire is headed to the Mavericks once he clears waivers, and other veterans could be bought out and become free agents after the deadline.

One of the most intriguing moves could involve Ray Allen, who will have contending suitors if he opts to play after sitting out all season.

The teams most motivated to deal might be the disappointing ones. Brooklyn probably can't find a taker for Deron Williams with all his injuries and dollars left on the $98.5 million contract he signed in 2012, but was close to moving Brook Lopez earlier this season. Denver's rocky season should have contenders calling to inquire about Arron Afflalo, Ty Lawson or Wilson Chandler.

The right move can help someone surge through spring. The wrong one could mean an early start on summer.

Don't count on top stars changing teams—none has at the deadline since Utah surprisingly sent Williams to the Nets on the eve of the 2011 one. Teams more likely trade at this point to clear cap space for the summer, which is why the New York Knicks could seek a deal for Jose Calderon after already shipping out guards J.R. Smith and Iman Shumpert.

Cleveland acquired them and, along with getting Timofey Mozgov from Denver in a separate deal, perhaps proved the best moves for this season were already made.

Dallas acted quickly to acquire Rajon Rondo from Boston in December, not long before Memphis capitalized on the Celtics' youth movement to deal for Jeff Green.

For Golden State and Atlanta, the current NBA leaders, their winning moves maybe came long ago.

The Warriors got Andrew Bogut from Milwaukee at the 2012 deadline to provide some muscle in the rugged West. Five months later, the Hawks acquired Kyle Korver from Chicago, and he could be headed for the best perimeter-shooting season in NBA history.

"When I got traded to Atlanta I was coming from Chicago and I wasn't really all that excited about it, to be honest with you. But all the people that Danny Ferry kept on bringing in, they've been not just good basketball people, but good people," Korver said.

"When I was a free agent two summers ago, I chose to come back. We had some opportunities to go to some teams that already were more established and could win, but I just really believed in what Atlanta was building and what they were doing. I could see my role in it and I just wanted to be a part of that. I never thought that it would come together this quickly."

That's the lightning in a bottle every team is hoping to catch.

SIDEBAR

As NBA soars on and off floor, trouble could be looming

NEW YORK (AP)—The NBA is soaring higher than ever.

With a growing global reach and international players dotting most rosters, a group of marketable rising young superstars led by Stephen Curry, more competitive balance, financial stability, and an upcoming infusion of $24 billion from a television deal, the league is bouncing beautifully.

The state of the game couldn't be much better. However, everyone knows good times can fade fast.

There's a pivotal play developing over the next few years that could threaten the thriving league again. As the movers and shakers in the pro basketball industry gathered this past weekend for All-Star festivities celebrating the league's past and present, there were watchful eyes on an uncertain future.

With players and owners able to opt out of the current collective bargaining agreement after the 2016-17 season, a labor battle looms—and players plan to be prepared.

The NBA Players Association unanimously elected LeBron James as vice president last week at its annual meeting. James' presence on the executive committee—and perhaps at the bargaining table—is a sign the union means business.

"We had a lockout before when I was in the league and our game was really good at that time, too," James, the four-time MVP and face of the sport told The Associated Press during the NBA's mid-season showcase. "Hopefully, we don't have to reach that point because both sides love where we're at and what we're doing."

On the surface, it's hard to find many flaws with the league's current status.

Ratings are high, the value of franchises has exploded and Commissioner Adam Silver has taken the ball from David Stern and powered forward. Silver, who recently celebrated one year on the job, has skillfully navigated around some sticky issues, including the racial remarks made by former Clippers owner Donald Sterling that could've divided players and ended up uniting them.

Silver acted quickly in removing Sterling, and his swift punishment strengthened a relationship with players that will undoubtedly be tested in the years ahead. Those potentially crippling issues are out of sight now, and a widening international audience is tuning in to see NBA action.

"The game is bigger than ever," said James, Cleveland's star now in his 12th season. "The money that's generated is bigger than ever and our athletes and our guys are doing what they need to do on the floor and off it to represent the game at a high level. So hopefully we don't have to come to the point that we were in 2011-12, when we had the lockout. The process is going to get started and we don't have to come to that."

Following the 2010-11 season, owners were able to negotiate a CBA that was more in their favor, cutting the players' share of basketball-related income from 57 percent to roughly 50, costing them millions in annual salaries. That contract runs through 2021, but with the economic boost—$2.6 billion per year—coming from the TV contract, players will fight harder for a larger portion of the pie.

"We want to negotiate a little better than we did last time," said Hawks sharpshooter Kyle Korver. "We're going to be well-equipped to stand toe-to-toe with the NBA and negotiate a fair deal. That's what we want—just a fair deal."

It's not like Silver isn't paying attention.

The commissioner has listened to the players on several fronts already, and he promised last weekend to take a harder look at scheduling and reducing the number of back-to-back games and the grueling, four-games-in-five-nights stretches to help keep players—"our partners," he calls them - fresh and the product crisp. Silver, too, will consider a makeover of the playoff format so that the best teams qualify.

Silver is concerned with keeping the game relevant amid stiff competition from other sports. It's vital to stay affordable and attractive to an aging population as well as the next generation of hoop fans. It's entertainment, after all, and Silver wants to keep the NBA in the center of the spotlight.

"I realize we have to earn the fans' support every day," he told The AP. "Over the course of my business career I've seen a lot of great businesses seemingly disappear. We don't take anything for granted and we realize that especially when it comes to the changing world of television that we have to focus on what's happening on tablets and smartphones and how young people are consuming media."

Silver sees other ways the NBA can increase profit margins.

He's the first commissioner of a major professional sports league in the U.S. to publicly support legalizing sports betting outside of Nevada. He wants Congress to change the federal ban on sports gambling and craft a structure that allows states to legalize and regulate betting.

That could bring billions more in revenue to the league, though it also could create challenges to protect the game's integrity, last tested by the scandal involving former referee Tim Donaghy in 2007.

On the court, the game has been pure basketball bliss.

There has been a return to team play with the Golden State Warriors and Atlanta Hawks—the conference leaders at the break—picking up where the San Antonio Spurs left off in last year's Finals when their selfless style dismantled the Miami Heat.

Teams are breaking away from isolation play and trying to copy San Antonio coach Gregg Popovich's pace-and-space system. Leading the way is a pair of Popovich's coaching protégées, Golden State's Steve Kerr and Atlanta's Mike Budenholzer, whose emphasis on ball movement is spreading rapidly.

"Five guys touching the ball and playing defense together," Hall of Famer Dominique Wilkins said. "It's the way basketball was meant to be played."

The hope, for now, is that the togetherness continues, but both sides sense a bigger game coming off the court in 2017.

"We'll take care of that once we get there," reigning MVP Kevin Durant said. "We're preparing now for anything."

Not-guilty plea for Colts' Ahmad Bradshaw on Ohio pot charge

CINCINNATI (AP)±An Indianapolis Colts running back pleaded not guilty Tuesday to marijuana possession charge after being stopped this month by state troopers on an interstate highway in western Ohio.

Preble County court officials said a Dayton attorney filed the plea for Ahmad Bradshaw, who also played for the Super Bowl-winning New York Giants. A pretrial hearing is scheduled for Feb. 25.

The Ohio State Highway Patrol said Bradshaw, 28, was stopped for a traffic violation on Interstate 70 on Feb. 5. He was charged with a misdemeanor count of possession of a small amount of marijuana and with following another vehicle too closely.

Trooper J.A. Barhorst said in a statement that he "smelled the strong odor of raw marijuana" coming from inside the Cadillac driven by Bradshaw after he pulled it over for a traffic violation.

He said both Bradshaw and his passenger denied marijuana was in the vehicle. Barhorst said while patting down Bradshaw, he felt a small container in his pocket. He said Bradshaw agreed to let him remove the container, which the trooper said contained a brown substance. The trooper said after being read his rights, Bradshaw said he had found the container in the vehicle, which he had borrowed for his trip.

Troopers then searched the vehicle and found in a backpack two medical marijuana containers: one empty and one with about 1.5 grams of marijuana, according to Barhorst's report. He stated that other items including rolling papers and two medicine bottles with unknown liquids were found in two backpacks. Barhorst reported that the items were sent to the highway patrol crime lab for analysis.

"When questioned about the contraband, suspect Bradshaw didn't want to talk," Barhorst stated.

Bradshaw was sent on his way after receiving the citations. A court deputy clerk said the marijuana charge carries $270 in fines.

Bradshaw's attorney, David Williamson, didn't immediately return a telephone call Tuesday.

Bradshaw had 725 total yards and eight touchdowns in 10 games for the Colts in 2014 before suffering a season-ending fractured fibula. He is facing free agency, and the team's website carried a recent story in which he said he hoped to stay with the Colts.

SIDEBAR

LA-area stadium developer donated $100K+ to local officials

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The development company that is moving quickly on a plan to build a stadium that could host a Southern California NFL team has given more than $118,000 in campaign contributions to officials in the city where it would be located.

Campaign finance forms show the bulk of the money went to Inglewood Mayor James T. Butts Jr., a major supporter of the stadium plan, the Los Angeles Times reported Monday.

San Francisco-based Hollywood Park Land Co. is developing the proposed 80,000-seat stadium on the site of the former Hollywood Park horse racing track. St. Louis Rams owner Stan Kroenke has been a partner in the company since last year.

The contributions came during four different campaigns starting in 2006, well before the recent stadium proposal, though the group has long planned a retail and residential development on the site. The rest of the donations went to a pair of city councilmen.

The plan has been moving quickly since it was proposed in January.

On Thursday, election officials verified that enough petition signatures had been gathered for the stadium plan to go before voters. The vote has not scheduled but could come this month. It would allow the developers to avoid potentially thorny environmental reviews that could extend for months or years.

Butts said the contributions have not influenced the speed of the project.

"Won't it be unusual if somebody who had so many projects in a community, that they won't want to exercise their free speech to try and ensure that people are in government that have good governing sense and business skills?" Butts told the Times. "I would find that unusual if they didn't."

Chris Meany, who is part of the development project, said, "It's normal and customary for big property owners to be supportive of the city."

Meanwhile, the San Diego Chargers on Monday issued a stern warning to their own City Hall as they look to replace their aging Qualcomm Stadium.

Source: Love to return as Ryder Cup captain

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Davis Love III is getting another shot as U.S. captain in the Ryder Cup.

Two people familiar with the decision told The Associated Press on Monday night that the PGA of America has selected Love as captain for the 2016 matches at Hazeltine. They spoke on condition of anonymity because it has not been announced.

Golf Channel first reported that Love will be the next captain.

He is to be introduced on Feb. 24, when the Honda Classic is held at PGA headquarters in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida.

Love led the Americans to a 10-6 lead at Medinah in 2012 until Ian Poulter and Europe staged an improbable rally and matched the greatest comeback in Ryder Cup history.

This will be the second straight Ryder Cup that the U.S. gets a repeat captain, and it didn't go so well the previous time. Tom Watson, at 65, was the oldest Ryder Cup captain and returned after a 21-year absence.

But he was out of touch with his team, made a questionable captain's pick with Webb Simpson and benched Phil Mickelson for both sessions on Saturday. Europe won for the third straight time, extending its dominance.

The Americans appeared to be in disarray all week, and it spilled over into the closing news conference when Mickelson heaped praise on Paul Azinger's winning formula in 2008 and asked why the PGA of America went away from that. With Watson sitting at the table, Mickelson said the captain never took any input from the players.

Out of that mess, the PGA of America organized a task force of players and former captains to build some continuity and tradition, similar to what Europe has done. Out of those task force meetings - the second and most recent one was at Torrey Pines two weeks ago - the PGA decided its best bet was with Love.

Azinger was mentioned as a possible candidate, and Fred Couples had the support of key players. It was not immediately clear if they were considered, or if Azinger wanted the job again. Azinger turned down an offer to be on the task force. Couples won all three times he was captain of the Presidents Cup.

Europe is expected to announce Darren Clarke as its captain. Love and Clarke are close friends.

The Americans have won the Ryder Cup only one time in the past seven tries.

LOPEZ

From Page 28

Sakano bagged the girls U14 singles crown after outlasting Malika Miyawaki in last Monday's finale, 1-6, 6-1, 12-10. The eventual champion earlier had an easier semis foe in Asia Raulerson, cruising to a 6-2, 6-1 win to barge into the finals. Miyawaki, on the other hand, struggled before in her first set win against Conatsu Kaga, 7-5, before coasting to a 6-1 triumph in the second set. Kaga rounded out the Top 3 following an 8-5 victory over Raulerson.

In the girls U12 singles finals, Tuttle won against Conatsu's younger sister Coume, 6-4, 6-3. Tuttle's title win completed the upset in the division as she earlier eliminated the top-ranked Maria Gregoire in the semifinals, 6-3, 6-2, before downing the second-seeded Coume. Tuttle also prevailed against Maaya Sato, 6-2, 6-1 to march into the semis against Gregoire, while Kaga defeated Ellie Epley, 6-0, 6-2, and Riko Ojima, 6-2, 6-1. Gregoire settled for third place after an 8-6 win versus Ojima in the consolation match.

In the girls U16 singles, which implemented a round-robin format, Isabel Heras went unbeaten to rule the four-player field. She secured the division championship after sweeping Tania Tan last Monday, 6-3, 6-2. Heras' two other victories were against Caitlyn Tinney (walkover) and Ami Tsukagoshi, 6-1, 6-1, while Tan also won against the two to take the runner-up honors.

The girls U10 division had a round-robin format with Imai sweeping her three matches to win the championship. She clinched the title following a 6-3 victory against Hyejin Elliot. Imai's first two triumphs were against Soleil Lamar, 6-2, and Michelle Ryu, 6-1. Elliot finished second, while Ryu completed the Top 3.

MIYAWAKI

From Page 28

and Victoria Chentsova (22.05) were the other kata participants in the black belt.

Kouki Watanabe topped the beginners' class with 17.00 points, while Japan's Shun Chiga (16.90) and Tanisha Bachani (16.70) came in second and third.

Kaishei Nagata (16.50), Kengo Sato (16.30), Dev Bachani (16.30), and Takeru Jim (16.10) finished fourth to seventh places.

Michael Miller won the gold in the Kinder event with 17.45 points, while Nagi Takahashi (17.30), and Jumpei Shoda (17.00) settled for the silver and bronze medals.

Taiga Scoggins (16.75), Sally Oryoji (16.50), and Sho Chiga of Japan (16.50) came in fourth to sixth places.

Miyawaki and Masuike then both added the kumite and sparring gold medals after winning their respective age divisions.

Miyawaki topped the Under-10 division beating Dev Bachani in the finals, while Masuike bested compatriot Yasunoshin Ishiguro in the U12 age group.

Chiga and Jinnosuke Suzuki finished third and fourth in the U10, while Lennosuke Suzuki placed third in the U12.

Nagata, who placed fourth in the beginner's kata, bounced back in the U8 kumite after defeating Kouki Watanabe for the gold. Kengo Sato and Takeru Jin came in third and fourth.

Tanisha Bachani won the girls' gold beating Ayaka Sato in the finals. Natsuki Nagata and Sami Nimura settled for third and fourth, while Kai Andre topped the U16 division relegating Nana Sakurai for the silver and Chentsova the bronze.

Shunei Ishiguro won his match up with Ruel Palma in the adults division.

MP

From Page 28

team's first goal in the second half (47th), while Tony Kim made it 7-0 two minutes later and Lee and Kim completed MPU's domination with their goal in the 69th and 74th, respectively.

In the two other boys U15 game, Matansa FC and Tan Holdings 1 also eased past separate foes.

In the first match last Saturday also at the Oleai pitch, Matansa defeated Tan Holdings 2, 4-1. Chad Shankweiller and Joshua De Leon tallied two goals apiece for the winning team, while Taka Borja was the lone scorer for Tan Holdings 2.

In the second game, Tan Holdings 1 whipped Paire FC, 8-0.

The newcomers teamed up in Tan Holdings 1's demolition of Paire. Thaiphi Austria and Albert Bergancia, who moved up from the U12 division to the U15 age group, had a rousing debut, collecting three goals apiece. Fellow newcomers—Anthony Fruit and Mark Esalan—chipped in one each.

GIRLS U15
MP United 3, Kanoa 0

Over at the Hopwood Junior High School Field, MP United shut down Kanoa in the final game in Week 1 last Saturday.

Both teams showed rust in their first game of the season, as neither squad hit the board in the first half. Maureeen Faye Doculan then broke the tie in the 49th minute, while Maaya Sato knocked in the last two goals.

Tan Holdings 5, Paire 3

In the first game, Tan Holdings edged Paire.

The opposing squads were in a deadlock at the break before Tan Holdings gained cushion in the second to win its first game. Chloe Salvosa forced the deadlock with her pair of goals, while Paire got its two goals from Guinevere Borja and Renita Fleming. Borja nailed another one in the second half, but Tan Holdings countered with three off back-to-back conversions from May Kay Alferos and one from Katherine Angeles.

In the other girls U15 tiff, Matansa FC and Shirley's FC engaged in a scoreless draw.

CO-ED U12
MP United 10, Tan Holdings 3

Rintaro Miyawaki and Grafton Howard connected on three goals apiece to lift MP United to an easy win over Tan Holdings FC in the boys co-ed U12 game last Saturday at the Hopwood pitch.

Miyawaki kicked off MPU's offense with his two straight goals to tie the match, while Howard also hit goals in succession, ending the first half with a pair to put the team on top, 5-3. Dylan Cho logged the other goal for MPU in the first half, while Taka Borja, Kohtaro Goto, and Puri Jolo scored for Tan Holdings.

In the second half, it was all MPU with Howard posting his third straight goal and Miyawaki also earning his third early in that period. Jon Villahomez, Brian Kim, and Jun Park were the other MPU scorers in the second half.

Kanoa 3, Matansa 3

In the other co-ed U12 tiff last weekend, Kanoa and Matansa were in a standoff.

Alex Achas recorded the game-tying goal for Matansa, as he knocked in his second in the 48th minute of the one-hour match. He had his first two minutes before the first half wrapped up to force a deadlock, 2-2. Benito Lolobeyong drilled the other goal for Matansa in the first half, as he found the back of the net in the 12th minute.

Ian Karl Maniago posted all three goals for Kanoa, as he made it to the board right in the second minute before getting his second in the 23rd. He earned a hat-trick in the second half and gave Kanoa a shaky lead with his conversion in the 44th.

Bammy's notches third win in masters

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Bammy's Restaurant blew out Saipan Warriors, 107-78, in the second game in the 2015 Graphics Invitational Masters Basketball League last Monday night at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium.

Bammy's walked away with the 29-point winning margin after pulling away late in the third quarter. It improved to a 3-2 record for a share of the third spot with KB Hite, pending the results of the latter's final game in the regular season against the second-running Armatech (4-1). Blue Haus leads the league with its perfect 6-0 mark, while the Slashers (1-3), Saipan Warriors (1-5), and Boomers (0-5) round out the team standings.

A 15-6 windup in the remaining three minutes and change of the third period helped Bammy's turn a slim 60-57 lead to a double-digit spread, 75-63, entering the final canto. Bammy's started the breakaway with a 10-0 run which Jun Tabora led, as he drilled 4 consecutive points in that stretch. Rodney Catalla capped the spurt with a triple and Joel Saplan added a layup, while only Bobby Geli scored more than one point in the Saipan Warriors' meltdown.

The Saipan Warriors never recovered from thereon, as besides failing to get contributions from other players, they also piled up turnovers. In the first few minutes of the fourth, they turned the ball over at least five times and Bammy's capitalized on these lapses, canning uncontested fastbreak layups to take the game away for good, 82-66.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Bammy's Restaurant's Joel Saplan goes up for a shot and is sandwiched by Saipan Warriors' Ramir Santos, right, and Reli Del Rio during the fourth quarter of their game in the 2015 Graphics Invitational Masters Basketball League last Monday night at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium.

Tabora top-scored for Bammy's with his 28 points, while Alex Ocampo and Catalla also finished in twin digits with 19 and 15, respectively. Four other Bammy's players contributed at least 5 points each.

Geli was the lone double-figure scorer for Saipan Warriors with his game-high 39 markers. Ramir Santos added 9, but majority of them came when the game was already out of reach for Saipan Warriors, while Reli Del Rio had a quiet 8 points and made several errant passes in the fourth frame.

With Saipan Warriors ending the regular season with a loss, it remained at the bottom half of the team standings and will face a higher ranked foe in the playoffs, possibly the No. 3 finisher in the field.

Blue Haus is the top finisher and automatically advanced to the semifinals, while Armatech can seal the No. 2 spot if it prevails in its final game against KB Hite last night. The Boomers and Slashers also collided in the first game last night with the latter's win dropping the former to the last spot. The Slashers will then close out the regular season on Friday with a game against Bammy's, while the first playoff game will also take place tomorrow with the No. 2 finisher taking on the No. 7 placer.

Bammy's 107 – Tabora 28, Alipio 19, Catalla 15, Alipio 8, Saplan 6, Enriquez 6, De Guzman 5, Vargas 2, Sampang 2, Zapata 2.

Saipan Warriors 78 – Geli 39, Santos 9, Del Rio 8, Mateo 7, Salazar 6, Alano 4, Surima 2.

Scoring by quarters: 21-23, 47-43, 75-63, 107-78.

MHS, SSHS remain 1-2 in MISO caging

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Marianas High School and Saipan Southern High School continue to occupy the Top 2 slots in the standings after lopsided results in Tuesday's matches in the 2014-2015 Marianas Interscholastic Sports Organization Boys Basketball League at the MHS Gymnasium.

MHS overcame a slow start in trouncing Mt. Carmel School, 74-36, for its 11th straight win, while SSHS kept Marianas Baptist Academy winless after hammering out a 76-42 decision.

Southern currently sits in second place with a 7-3 record followed by MCS' 7-4 slate. MHS could have swept the elimination round as it was still playing MBA at press time.

The Dolphins found themselves trailing by a point after the first 10 minutes of play as William Camacho scored 8 of the Knights' 16 points.

But MCS wasn't ready for a flood of points and like a sleeping giant, MHS poured in 24 markers in the second quarter to enter the break enjoying a 39-23 spread.

MHS did not slow down from there while turnovers and hurried shots did not help Mt. Carmel's cause.

Ethan Manalili scored the Dolphins' first 10 points in the first quarter and finished with 12, while Michael Espinosa and Kobee Mendoza chipped in 11 and 9 markers each. Karlo De Leon, Prince Factor, and DJay Ong combined for 24.

Camacho was the lone Knight to hit double digits with 12, while Son Jung Hyun and Zander Tkel finished scored 6 apiece.

In the second game, Mi'i Tekopua tallied 14 points to lead three other SSHS players who break the 10-point barrier with Ryan Esmundo, Joseph Taitano, and Edilberto Javier Jr. contributing 12, 11, and 10 markers.

The Manta Rays also found themselves trailing by 3 after the first quarter, but stepped on the gas in the second to pull away and never looked back.

Christian Kim scored 16 to pace MBA's losing cause, while Lim Soo Yo ended up with 13.

It was a double-victory celebration for the Rays as its SSHS 9 squad downed MHS 9, 46-31.

N-Nes Siech scored 5 straight points and dished off a pass to Jethro Cruz, who converted the fastbreak layup as SSHS 9 ended the first period holding on to a 15-11 lead.

Both teams slowed down in the second and the Rays pulled away in the second to complete the win.

June Alipio and Emmanuel Cobacha scored 12 points each, while Siech finished with 10.

No MHS 9 player hit double figures with Matthew Mamaril coming up with 9, while Adrian De Lun and John Carlo Prado had 7 and 5 points, respectively.

First Game

SSHS 9 46 – Alipio 12, Cobacha 12, Siech 10, Kapileo 7, Diyco 5.

MHS 9 31 – Mamaril 9, De Luna 7, Prado 5, Hofschneider 4, Pangelinan 4, Mendoza 2.

Scoring by quarters: 15-11, 19-18, 35-22, 46-31.

Second Game

SSHS 76 – Tekopua 14, Esmundo 12, Taitano 11, Jevier Jr. 10, Bondoc 7, Kintaro 6, Cruz 5, Palacios 5, Deleon Guerrero 3, Ogasawara 3.

MBA 42 – C. Kim 16, Lim 13, W. J. Kim 6, Kong 5, Ryoo 2.

Scoring by quarters: 15-18, 39-24, 56-38, 76-42.

Third Game

MHS 74 – Manalili 12, Espinosa 11, Mendoza 9, De Leon 8, Factor 8, Ong 8, Arciaga 6, Manlonzo 5, Montes 4, Benavente 3.

MCS 36 – Camacho 12, Son 6, Tkel 6, Gamab 3, Toves 3, Cepeda 2, A. Santos 2, M. Santos 2.

Scoring by quarters: 15-16, 39-23, 61-31, 74-36.

JON PEREZ
Adrian De Luna and Marianas High School 9 were no match against their counterparts from Saipan Southern High School in the Marianas Interscholastic Sports Organization Boys basketball league.

Mobil, Joeten crush business league foes

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Mobil/JP World and Joeten Enterprises crushed separate foes in the continuation of the 2015 Inter-Commercial Business Basketball League last Tuesday night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Mobil coasted to an easy 107-62 decision over Marpac for its second straight win, while Joeten waltzed to a 75-40 triumph against Saipan Stevedore to keep pace with the early leaders in the inaugural tournament.

Veteran Jun Estolas and youthful Prince Factor fuelled Mobil's offense forming their team's 1-2 scoring punch all game long.

Estolas scattered 21 points, while Factor finished with the same output and scored 6 straight markers when Mobil established some distance against a listless Marpac side.

Mobil, after posting a 26-11 spread heading into the second period, was never threatened after that and zoomed to victory to join idle Pacific Islands Club on top of the standings with 2-0 slates.

Enjoying huge leads the entire game gave Mobil coach Marlon Sison the chance to field in his shock troopers and tinker with his starting unit. He used 11 players with five turning in 9 or more points.

Mike Espinosa ended up with 19 points, while Lawrence Dikito, J.P. Jose, and Manolo Manalo added 11 markers each.

Jerald Rivera was a point shy of hitting double digits with 9.

Frank Mettao led Marpac's losing cause with 22 points, while Jay Diyco was the other player that turned in double figures with 21.

It was the same story in the first game with Joeten also pulling away in the first quarter where they limited Saipan Stevedore to only 8 points in coasting to a 75-40 win.

Saipan Stevedore showed little resistance from there on, missing a number of shots and committed a lot of turnovers against Joeten's stifling defense.

Rocyl Ritual scored 15 while Y.J. Nakayama and Dixon Kwon chipped in 10 and 9 points apiece for Joeten. Renz Benghit, Alex Lauron, Jun Sambile, Syl Teregeyo, Ferdie Tobias, and Dean Borja combined for 36 markers.

Ronald Coloma and Mike Olaitiman were the lone bright spots for Saipan Stevedore with 20 and 10 points, respectively.

Action continues tonight with Saipan Ice & Water taking on IT&E in the 6:30pm first game, while Docomo Pacific clashes with PSS in the second match at 8pm.

First Game

Joeten 75 – Ritual 15, Nakayama 10, Kwon 9, Benghit 7, Lauron 6, Sambile 6, Teregeyo 6, Tobias 6, Borja 5, Rasa 3, Pua 2.

Saipan Stevedore 40 – Coloma 20, Olaitiman 10, Acosta 4, Aldan 2, Kapileo 2, Marcelo 2.

Scoring by quarters: 34-8, 51-22, 63-34, 75-40.

Second Game

Mobil/JP World 107 – Estolas 21, Factor 21, M. Espinosa 19, Dikito 11, Jose 11, Manalo 11, Rivera 9, W. Espinosa 2, Sacramento 2.

Marpac 62 – Mettao 22, Diyco 21, Castro 5, Lee 5, Sanchez 2, Sablan 2, Salem 2, Taitano 2.

Scoring by quarters: 26-11, 54-26, 82-44, 107-62.

A-Rod gives apology but no explanation ahead of return
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Lopez, Lee split division titles

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Mikayla Lopez checks on Carol Lee's position first before serving during their girls U18 title match in the 2015 Coconut Tennis Classic last Monday at the AMP tennis courts.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Mikayla Lopez and Carol Lee faced off in the finals twice and split division titles in the 2015 Coconut Tennis Classic that concluded last Monday at the American Memorial Park tennis courts.

Lopez got the first championship after beating Lee, 6-2, 6-1, in their morning title duel in the women's singles event. Lopez, who was seeded first in the division and drew a bye in the five-player draw made it to the finals following a 6-2, 6-1 win over eventual third placer Negahr Rastguiy. Rastguiy arranged a semis tiff against Lopez after eliminating Malika Miyawaki, 6-1, 6-0.

Lee also drew a bye in the first round and marched into the finals after ousting Tan, 6-1, 6-0, but failed to notch the all-important win against Lopez in the finals.

After the morning loss, Lee returned to the AMP courts in the afternoon for the girls U18 division title match and avenged her defeat with a 6-1, 6-3 victory. Lee dethroned Lopez, who topped last year's contest, which also had a round-robin format and featured the former, Rastguiy, and Alina Ishikawa. This year, only three entered the division with Lee beating Rastguiy in the opening week, 6-1, 6-0, and Lopez prevailing against the latter (via walkover) also in the first week of the two-weekend competition.

Joining Lee and Lopez in the champions' circle were Mimi Sakano, Erika Tuttle, Isabel Heras, and Tiara Imai.

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MP United sweep debut games

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

MP United Football Club got off to a strong start, winning all its three games in the spring season opening of the 2015 NMIFA Youth League over the weekend.

The club's boys U15 team saw action first and clobbered Kanoa FC, 9-0, last Friday at the Oleai Sports Complex Field.

Seven different players scored in MP United's first win with Oliver Lee and Edwin Kim making two apiece and Go Sekiguchi, Sunjoon Tenorio, Alex Park, Tony Kim, and Steven Goodwin adding one apiece. Sekiguchi hit the board first with his goal in the fourth minute, while Tenorio nailed the second one three minutes later. Park and Lee nailed the next two goals for MPU in the first frame, scoring in the 17th and 30th, respectively, while Edwin Kim made it to the board three minutes before the opening half concluded.

Edwin Kim also nailed the

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO
An MP United FC player dribbles away from a Kanoa FC defender during their game in the girls U15 division of the 2015 NMIFA Spring Youth League last Saturday at the Hopwood Junior High School Field.

Miyawaki, Masuike bag 2 gold medals in Karate tourney

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Local bet Rintaro Miyawaki and visiting Keisuke Masuike became double gold medalists in the recently concluded Karatedo tournament at the dojo on the second floor of Himawari restaurant in Garapan.

Miyawaki bested five other karatekas to rule the kata event for brown and green belts in the tournament organized by the Northern Mariana Islands Karate-do Federation under sensei Eiichi Ishiguro.

Kata is a sequence of movements that represent various offensive and defensive postures with performers given points based on stance and movement.

Miyawaki tallied 19.50 points to beat Sami Nimura (19.40), who settled for the bronze. Natsuki Nagata placed third with 19.20 points.

Ayaka Sato (19.15), Lennosuke Suzuki (19.10), and Jinnosuke Suzuki (18.90) were the other participants in the brown and green belts.

Masuike, part of four visiting karatekas, was the top black-belter with 23.30 points followed by Shunei Ishiguro's 23.05 and Nana Sakurai's 23.00 for the silver and bronze respectively.

Yasunoshin Ishiguro of Japan (22.90), Ruel Palma (22.70), Kei Andre (22.40),

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JON PEREZ
Rintaro Miyawaki, right, blocks a kick by Dev Bachani in their gold medal match in kumite's Under-10 division.